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FOUR POEMS

GOLDSMITH  
The Deserted Village

TENNYSON  
Lancelot and Elaine

WORDSWORTH  
Ode to Duty

GRAY—The Elegy

Annotated by  
STEVENSON

No. 26





55  
Mad. Boucher.

Alma College.

St. Thomas.

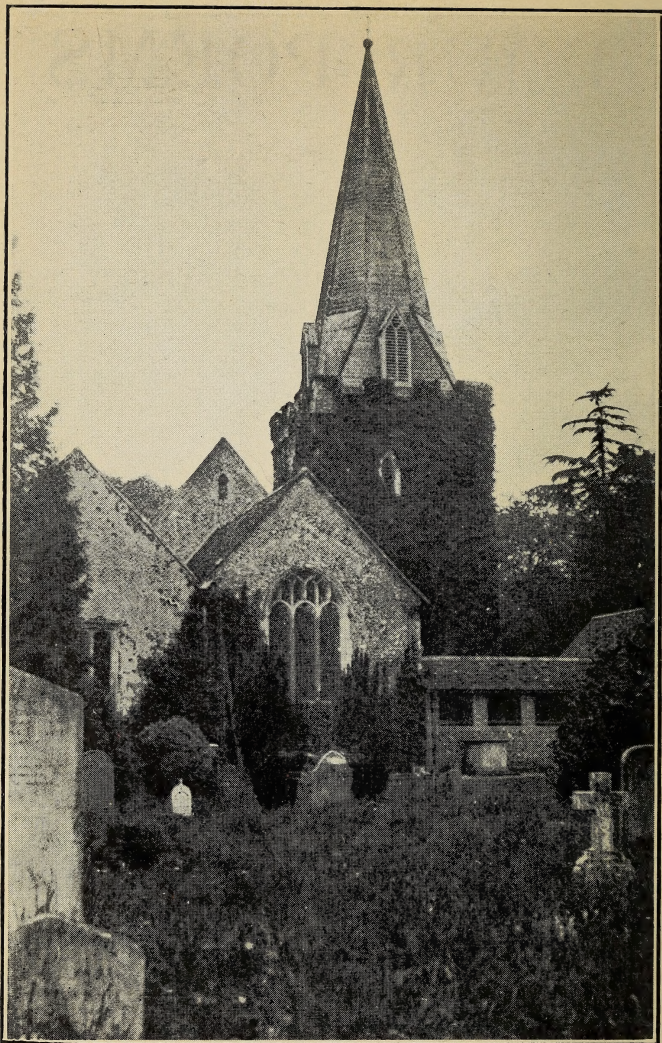
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*Photograph by the Editor*

**IN STOKE POGES CHURCHYARD**

The Poet's own grave is beneath the window to the left.



# FOUR POEMS

The Deserted Village

Lancelot and Elaine

Ode to Duty

Elegy, Written in a Country  
Churchyard

WITH ANNOTATIONS BY

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TORONTO

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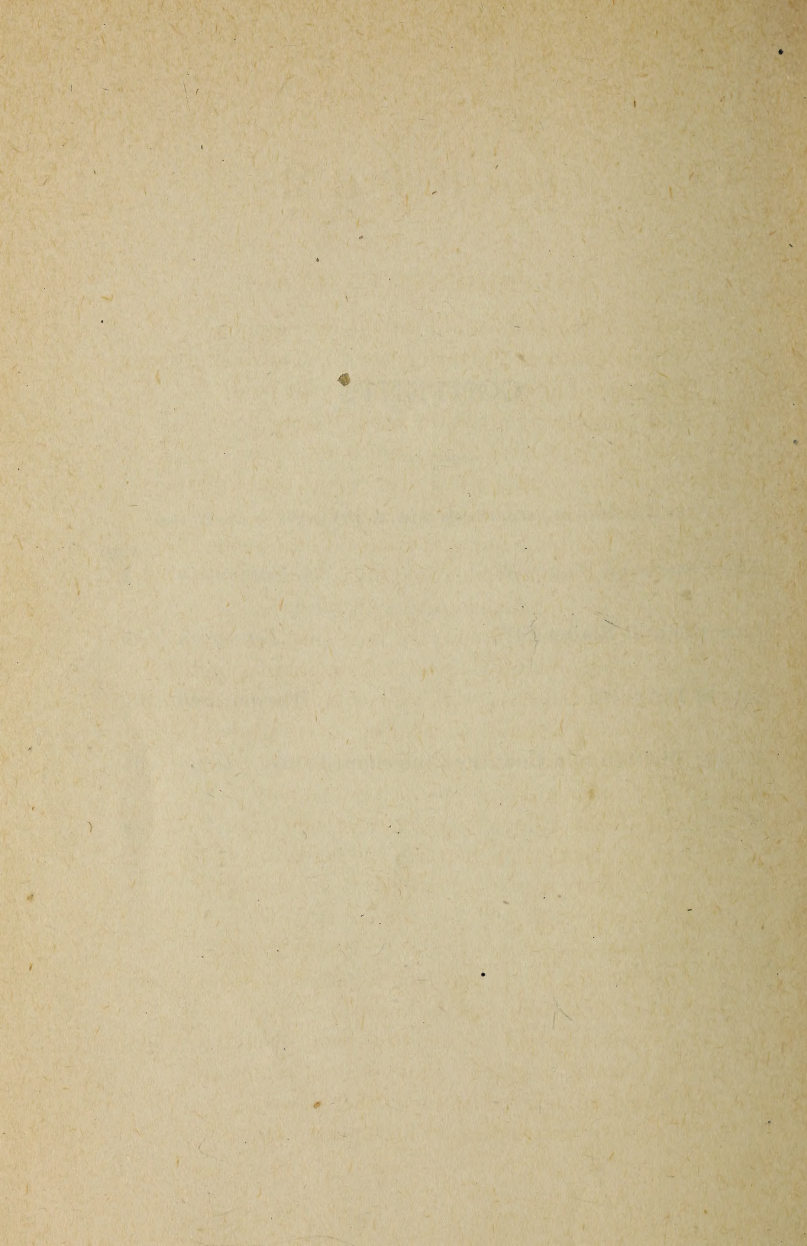


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amare pentuamelw.  
19th Century.

## FOUR POEMS

### THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

Sweet Auburn ! loveliest village of the plain,  
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,  
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd ;  
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,

*haunts* Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,  
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene !

How often have I paus'd on every charm,  
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,  
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,

10

*neat* The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,  
The hawthorn bush with seats beneath the shade,  
For talking age and whispering lovers made !  
How often have I blest the coming day,

*releasing* When toil remitting lent its turn to play,  
And all the village train, from labour free,

*conduct* Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree ;  
While many a pastime circled in the shade,

The young contending as the old survey'd ;

20

*skillful tricks* And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,  
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round ;  
And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,

Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd ;

The dancing pair that simply sought renown,

By holding out, to tire each other down ;

The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,

While secret laughter titter'd round the place ;  
 The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,  
 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove : 30  
 These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,  
 With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please ;  
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,  
 These were thy charms,—but all these charms are fled ✓

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn !  
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;  
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,  
 And desolation saddens all thy green :  
 One only master grasps the whole domain,  
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40  
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
 But chok'd with sedges works its weedy way ;  
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;  
 Amidst thy desert-walks the lapwing flies,  
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.  
 Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,  
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;  
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,  
 Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50 ✓

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :  
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;  
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made :  
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
 When once destroy'd, can never be supplied. ✓

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
 When every rood of ground maintain'd its man ;  
 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,



Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more ; 60  
His best companions, innocence and health ;  
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd ; trade's unfeeling train  
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain ;  
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,  
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose ;  
And every want to opulence allied,  
And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room, 70  
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,  
Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green :  
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,  
And rural mirth and manners are no more. *customs*

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour, *source of all happiness*  
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.  
Here, as I take my solitary rounds  
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,  
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view  
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80  
Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train, *succession of incidents*  
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain. ✓

In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—  
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown, *always.*  
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;  
To husband out life's taper at the close,  
And keep the flame from wasting by repose ;  
I still had hopes—for pride attends us still—  
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill, 90  
Around my fire an evening group to draw,

And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;  
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,  
 I still had hopes, my long vexations past,  
 Here to return,—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement ! friend to life's decline,  
 Retreat from care, that never must be mine, *can.*  
 How blest is he who crowns in shades like these  
 A youth of labour with an age of ease ; 100  
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !  
 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,  
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ; *risking*  
 No surly porter stands in guilty state, *wicked display.*  
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate :  
 But on he moves to meet his latter end, *death.*  
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend ;  
 Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,  
 While resignation gently slopes the way ; 110  
 And, all his prospects brightening to the last,  
 His heaven commences ere the world be past. ✓

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close  
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.  
 There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow, *Careless.*  
 The mingling notes came soften'd from below :  
 The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,  
 The sober herd that low'd to meet their young ;  
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool ;  
 The playful children just let loose from school ; 120  
 The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind, *barking*  
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind : *reminds a*  
 These all in sweet confusion sought the shade, *free from c*  
 And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.

But now the sounds of population fail,  
 No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale, *rise up and down*  
 No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread, *get the breeze*  
 But all the bloomy flush of life is fled.  
 All but yon widow'd, solitary thing  
 That feebly bends beside the plashy spring ; 130  
 She, wretched matron,—forc'd in age, for bread,  
 To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
 To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,  
 To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn—  
 She only left of all the harmless train,  
 The sad historian of the pensive plain. ✓

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,  
 And still where many a garden flower grows wild,  
 There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
 The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140  
 A man he was to all the country dear,  
 And passing rich with forty pounds a year.  
 Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
 Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wish'd to change, his place ;  
 Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,  
 By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour ;  
 Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,  
 More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.  
 His house was known to all the vagrant train *wandered by.*  
 He chid their wanderings, but reliev'd their pain ; 150  
 The long-remember'd beggar was his guest, *had visited him many*  
 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ; *times*  
 The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
 Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd ;  
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,  
 Sate by his fire, and talk'd the night away ;  
 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,



Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.  
 Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,  
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160  
 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
 His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
 And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side :  
 But in his duty prompt at every call,  
 He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all.  
And as a bird each fond endearment tries  
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,  
 He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,  
 Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid, *departing.*  
 And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd, *frighten'd by his*  
 The reverend champion stood. At his control,  
 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;  
 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,  
 And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
 His looks adorn'd the venerable place ;  
 Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,  
 And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray. *in a flippened mood* 180  
 The service past, around the pious man,  
 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;  
 Even children follow'd, with endearing wile, tricks.  
 And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.  
 His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,  
 Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distrest ;  
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs, were given,  
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven :  
 As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,

*Before it blooms the furze is cut for fodder  
and that it has been allowed to bloom shows  
the few people living in the village.*

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

7

Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head. ✓

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way  
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,  
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,  
The village master taught his little school.  
A man severe he was, and stern to view ;  
I knew him well, and every truant knew :  
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace  
The day's disasters in his morning face ; 200  
Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee,  
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;  
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,  
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.  
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,  
The love he bore to learning was in fault.  
The village all declar'd how much he knew ;  
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too ; *numbers*  
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage, *knows when festivals +*  
And even the story ran that he could gauge ; *tell how 210* *plow countries*  
In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill, *be.*  
For even though vanquish'd he could argue still ;  
While words of learned length and thundering sound  
Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around ;  
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew  
That one small head could carry all he knew. ✓  
*much was in each*

But past is all his fame. The very spot,  
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.  
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,  
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220  
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,  
Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,

Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,  
 And news much older than their ale went round.  
 Imagination fondly stoops to trace  
 The parlour splendours of that festive place :  
 The whitewash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,  
 The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door ;  
 The chest, contriv'd a double debt to pay,  
 A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day ;  
 The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,  
 The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;  
 The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,  
 With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay,  
 While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,  
 Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

230

Vain, transitory splendours ! could not all  
Relieve the tottering mansion from its fall ? *Safe it from*  
 Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart  
 An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.  
 Thither no more the peasant shall repair  
 To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;  
 No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,  
 No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail ; *hunter*  
 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,  
 Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear ;  
 The host himself no longer shall be found  
 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;  
 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest, *servant*  
 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. ✓

240

250

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,  
 These simple blessings of the lowly train ;  
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,  
 One native charm than all the gloss of art *artificial show.*  
 Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,



The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway; *admits superior class*  
 Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind, *carefree*.  
 Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd.  
 But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,  
 With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,— 260  
 In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain, *idlers*.  
 The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;  
 And even while fashion's brightest arts decoy, *tempt*  
 The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy—

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey  
 The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,  
 'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand  
 Between a splendid and a happy land.  
 Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,  
~~distract~~ And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ; 270  
 Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,  
 And rich men flock from all the world around.  
 Yet count our gains : this wealth is but a name,  
 That leaves our useful products still the same. *necessities*  
 Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride  
 Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;  
 Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,  
 Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds :  
 The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth  
 Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their growth ;  
 His seat, where solitary sports are seen, 281  
 Indignant spurns the cottage from the green ;  
 Around the world each needful product flies,  
 For all the luxuries the world supplies ;  
 While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure, all  
 In barren splendour feebly waits the fall. ✓

As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,  
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,  
*Certain she is going to please by her youthfulness*

Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,  
 Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes; *290*  
 But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,  
 When time advances, and when lovers fail,  
 She then shines forth, solicitous to bless, *strives to please.*  
 In all the glaring impotence of dress :  
 Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,  
 In nature's simplest charms at first array'd ;  
 But, verging to decline, its splendours rise,  
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise ;  
 While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,  
 The mournful peasant leads his humble band ; *300*  
 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,  
 The country blooms—a garden and a grave. ✓

Where then, ah ! where shall poverty reside,  
 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ? *beside.*  
 If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,  
 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,  
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,  
 And even the bare-worn common is denied.  
 If to the city sped, what waits him there ?  
 To see profusion that he must not share ; *310*  
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd, *harmful.*  
 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind ; *feed full.*  
 To see those joys the sons of pleasure know  
 Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.  
 Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,  
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade ;  
 Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,  
 There the black gibbet glooms beside the way. *where people woe.*  
 The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,  
 Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train ; *320*  
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,  
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.

Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !  
Sure these denote one universal joy !  
Are these thy serious thoughts? Ah ! turn thine eyes  
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.  
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,  
Has wept at tales of innocence distress ;  
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,  
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ; 330  
Now lost to all—her friends, her virtue fled—  
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,  
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,  
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,  
When idly first, ambitious of the town,  
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,  
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain ?  
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,  
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread ! 340

Ah, no ! To distant climes, a dreary scene,  
Where half the convex world intrudes between,  
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,  
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.  
Far different there from all that charm'd before,  
The various terrors of that horrid shore :  
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,  
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;  
{ Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,  
{ But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ; 350  
Those pois'nous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd  
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around ;  
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake  
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake ;  
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,



And savage men more murderous still than they ;  
 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,  
 Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.  
 Far different these from every former scene,  
 The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360  
 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,  
 That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven ! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day  
 That call'd them from their native walks away ;  
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,  
 Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their last,  
 And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain  
 For seats like these beyond the western main ;  
 And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,  
 Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep ! 370  
 The good old sire the first prepar'd to go  
 To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;  
 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,  
 He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.

His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,  
 The fond companion of his helpless years,  
 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,  
 And left a lover's for a father's arms.  
 With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,  
 And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose ; 380  
 And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear  
 And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear ;  
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief  
 In all the silent manliness of grief. ✓

O Luxury ! thou curst by Heaven's decree,  
 How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee !  
 How do thy potions, with insidious joy,

Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy !  
 Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,  
 Boast of a florid vigour not their own. 390  
 At every draught more large and large they grow,  
 A bloated mass of rank, unwieldy woe ;  
 Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound  
 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round. ✓

Even now the devastation is begun,  
 And half the business of destruction done ;  
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,  
 I see the rural Virtues leave the land.  
 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,  
 That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400  
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,  
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.  
 Contented Toil, and hospitable Care,  
 And kind connubial Tenderness, are there ;  
 And Piety with wishes plac'd above,  
 And steady Loyalty, and faithful Love.  
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,  
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;  
 Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,  
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ; 410  
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried, scorn'd.  
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;  
 Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,  
 That found'st me poor at first and keep'st me so ;  
 Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,  
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !  
 Farewell ! and oh ! where'er thy voice be tried,  
 On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,  
 Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,  
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420

Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,  
Redress the rigours of the inclement clime;

Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain, *scorn, influence*

Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain; *mad rush for wealth*

Teach him, that states of native strength possess, *natural strength*

Though very poor, may still be very blest; *fortunate. Chard*

That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,

As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away; *small hill at a harbour*

While self-dependent power can time defy,

As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

430

*A didactic - Description - teaches  
 a moral.*



LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,  
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
 High in her chamber up a tower to the east  
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;  
 Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray  
 Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;  
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it  
 A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
 In their own tinct, and added, of her wit, 10  
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
 And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
 Nor rested thus content, but day by day,  
 Leaving her household and good father, climb'd  
 That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,  
 Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,  
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,  
 Now made a pretty history to herself  
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
 And every scratch a lance had made upon it, 20  
 Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;  
 That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;  
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:  
 And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was there!  
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God  
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,  
 And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield  
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?

He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
 For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,  
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name  
 Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

30

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him King,  
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,  
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.  
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
 Like its own mists to all the mountain side.  
 For here two brothers, one a king, had met,  
 And fought together; but their names were lost; 40  
 And each had slain his brother at a blow;  
 And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd:  
 And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,  
 And lichen'd into color with the crags:  
 And he, that once was king, had on a crown  
 Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.  
 And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass,  
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull  
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown 50  
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn: *onims.*  
 And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,  
 And set it on his head, and in his heart  
 Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a King, he had the gems  
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his  
 knights,  
 Saying, "These jewels, whereupon I chanced  
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the king's—

For public use: henceforward let there be, 60  
 Once every year, a joust for one of these:  
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn  
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow  
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive  
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land  
 Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he spoke:  
 And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still  
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,  
 With purpose to present them to the Queen,  
 When all were won; but meaning all at once 70  
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
 Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last  
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his court  
 Hard on the river nigh the place which now  
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust  
 At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
 Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,  
 "Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move  
 To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "ye  
 know it."  
 "Then will ye miss," he answer'd, "the great deeds 80  
 Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,  
 A sight ye love to look on." And the Queen  
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.  
 He thinking that he read her meaning there,  
 "Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more  
 Than many diamonds," yielded; and a heart  
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen  
 (However much he yearn'd to make complete 90

The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)  
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,  
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,  
And lets me from the saddle;" and the King  
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.  
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!  
Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights  
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd  
Will murmur, 'Lo, the shameless ones, who take 100  
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!' "

Then Lancelot vext at having lied in vain:  
"Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,  
My Queen, that summer, when ye loved me first.  
Then of the crowd ye took no more account  
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,  
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,  
Them surely I can silence with all ease.  
But now my loyal worship is allow'd 110  
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,  
The pearl of beauty: and our knights at feast  
Have pledged us in this union, while the King  
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?  
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,  
Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh: 120  
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,



That passionate perfection, my good lord—  
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?  
He never spake word of reproach to me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
He cares not for me: only here to-day  
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes:  
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else  
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible, 130  
To make them like himself: but, friend, to me  
He is all fault who has no fault at all:  
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;  
The low sun makes the colour: I am yours,  
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.  
And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:  
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream  
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here  
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights: 140  
"And with what face, after my pretext made,  
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
Before a King who honors his own word,  
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,  
"A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else he had not lost me: but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit: we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at a touch,  
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,  
This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown: 150  
Win! by this kiss you will: and our true King

Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,  
As all for glory; for to speak him true,  
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,  
No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
He loves it in his knights more than himself:  
They prove to him his work: win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,  
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare, 160  
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,  
And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;  
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the dales  
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.  
Thither he made, and wound the gateway horn.  
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man  
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd. 170  
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;  
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,  
Moving to meet him in the castle court;  
And close behind them stept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house  
There was not: some light jest among them rose  
With laughter dying down as the great knight  
Approach'd them: then the Lord of Astolat:  
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name 180  
Livest between the lips? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,  
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.

Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,  
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:  
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,  
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.  
But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not, 190  
Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —  
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat, "Here is Torre's:  
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre;  
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.  
His ye can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,  
"Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it."  
Here laughed the father saying, "Fie, Sir Churl,  
Is that an answer for a noble knight? 200  
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,  
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,  
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not  
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,  
"For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:  
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:  
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt 210  
That some one put this diamond in her hand,  
And that it was too slippery to be held,  
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,

The castle-well, belike; and then I said  
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)  
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.  
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win: 220  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So ye will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,  
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship  
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,  
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend;  
And you shall win this diamond — as I hear,  
It is a fair large diamond,— if ye may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will."  
"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,  
"Such be for queens, and not for simple maids." 230  
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,  
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement  
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,  
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:  
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
And only Queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid  
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like." 240

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,  
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.  
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,



In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.  
 Another sinning on such heights with one,  
 The flower of all the west and all the world,  
 Had been the sleeker for it: but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose 250  
And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man  
 That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
 And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
 However marr'd, of more than twice her years,  
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,  
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes  
 And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court, 260  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain  
 Hid under grace, as in a smaller time, *less heroic times*  
 But kindly man moving among his kind:  
 Whom they with meats and vintage of their best,  
 And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,  
 And ever well and readily answer'd he:  
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,  
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man, 270  
 Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,  
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.  
 "He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design  
 Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;  
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods

By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke  
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said,  
rapt

280

By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth  
Towards greatness in its elder, "you have fought.  
O tell us — for we live apart — you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke  
And answered him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;  
And in the four wild battles by the shore  
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war  
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts  
Of Celidon the forest; and again

290

By castle Gurnion, where the glorious King  
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,  
Carved of one emerald, center'd in a sun  
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;  
And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse  
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;  
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit, 300  
Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount  
Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand  
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume  
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,

And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,  
 'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King  
 However mild he seems at home, nor cares 310  
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —  
 For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs  
 Saying, his knights are better men than he —  
 Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
 Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives  
No greater leader."

While he uttered this,  
 Low to her own heart said the lily maid,  
 "Save your great self, fair lord": and when he fell  
 From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —  
 Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind — 320  
 She still took note that when the living smile  
 Died from his lips, across him came a cloud  
 Of melancholy severe, from which again,  
 Whenever in her hovering to and fro  
 The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,  
 There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness  
 Of manners and of nature: and she thought  
 That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.  
 And all night long his face before her lived,  
 As when a painter, poring on a face, 330  
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man  
 Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
 The shape and colour of a mind and life,  
 Lives for his children, ever at its best  
 And fullest; so the face before her lived,  
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full  
 Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.  
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought

*Smile*

She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.  
 First as in fear, step after step, she stole 340  
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:  
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,  
 "This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine  
 Past inward, as she came from out the tower.  
 There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and  
 smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.  
 Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew  
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed  
 Than if seven men had set upon him, saw  
 The maiden standing in the dewy light. 350  
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.  
 Then came on him a sort of sacred fear, *feeling of reverence for*  
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood *his fear she will love*  
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's. *him*  
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,  
 That he should wear her favor at the tilt.  
 She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.

"Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,  
 I well believe, the noblest—will you wear  
 My favour at this tourney?" "Nay," said he, 360  
 "Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
 Favour of any lady in the lists.  
 Such is my wont, as those who know me know."  
 "Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine  
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,  
 That those who know should know you." And he  
 turn'd

Her counsel up and down within his mind,  
 And found it true, and answer'd: "True, my child.



Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:  
What is it?" and she told him "A red sleeve 370  
Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he  
bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile,  
Saying, "I never yet have done so much  
For any maiden living," and the blood  
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;  
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine  
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,  
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,  
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine;  
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield 380  
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"  
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your Squire!"

Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily maid,  
For fear our people call you lily maid  
In earnest, let me bring your colour back;  
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed."  
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,  
And thus they moved away: she stay'd a minute,  
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—  
Her bright hair blown about the serious face 390  
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—  
Paused in the gateway, standing by the shield  
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off  
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.  
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,  
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away  
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,

To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight  
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years 400  
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd,  
 And ever labouring had scoop'd himself  
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,  
 And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;  
 The green light from the meadows underneath  
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;  
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees  
 And poplars made a noise of falling showers.  
 And thither wending there that night they bode. 410

But when the next day broke from underground,  
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,  
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:  
 Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name  
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"  
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,  
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise  
 But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?"  
 And after muttering, "The great Lancelot,"  
 At last he got his breath and answer'd, "One, 420  
 One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,  
The dread Pendragon, Britain's king of kings, *dragons*  
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
 He will be there—then were I stricken blind  
 That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists  
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round  
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,

Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat 430  
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,  
 Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,  
 And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,  
 And from the carven-work behind him crept  
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make  
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them  
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable  
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found  
 The new design wherein they lost themselves,  
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the work: 440  
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said,  
 "Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat,  
 The truer lance: but there is many a youth  
 Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
 And overcome it; and in me there dwells  
 No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
 Of greatness to know well I am not great:  
 There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him 450  
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
 The trumpets blew; and then did either side,  
 They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,  
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,  
 Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
 Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,  
 If any man that day were left afield,  
 The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.  
 And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
 Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd into it 460  
 Against the stronger: little need to speak

Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,  
Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,  
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,  
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight  
Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, "Lo!  
What is he? I do not mean the force alone—  
The grace and versatility of the man— 470  
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot worn  
Favour of any lady in the lists?  
Not such his wont, as we that know him, know."  
"How then? who then?" a fury seized them all,  
A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.  
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds,  
and thus,  
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they  
made  
In moving, all together down upon him  
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea, 480  
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all  
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,  
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
And him that helms it, so they overbore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear  
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head  
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt, and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;  
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth, 490



And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.  
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
But thought to do while he might yet endure,  
And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle  
To those he fought with,—drave his kith and kin,  
And all the Table Round that held the lists,  
Back to the barrier; then the heralds blew  
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve  
Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights, 500  
His party, cried "Advance and take thy prize  
The diamond;" but he answer'd, "Diamond me  
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!  
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!  
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field  
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.  
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,  
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-head:"  
"Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine, 510  
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."  
But he, "I die already with it: draw—  
Draw,"—and Lavaine drew, and that other gave  
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,  
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank  
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.  
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,  
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt  
Whether to live or die, for many a week  
Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove 520  
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,  
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,  
His party, knights of utmost North and West,  
Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,  
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,  
"Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,  
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize  
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."

"Heaven hinder," said the King, "that such an one, 530  
So great a knight as we have seen to-day—  
He seem'd to me another Lancelot—  
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—  
He must not pass uncared for. Gawain, rise,  
My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight.  
Wounded and wearied, needs must he be near.  
I charge you that you get at once to horse.  
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of  
you

Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:  
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him 540  
No customary honor: since the knight  
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,  
Ourselves will send it after. Wherefore take  
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,  
And bring us what he is, and how he fares,  
And cease not from your quest, until ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower above,  
To which it made a restless heart, he took,  
And gave, the diamond; then from where he sat  
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose, 550  
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince  
In the mid might and flourish of his May,  
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,

And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint  
And Lamorack, a good knight, but therewithal  
Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house,  
Nor often loyal to his word, and now  
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth  
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave  
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings. 560

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;  
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,  
Past, thinking, "Is it Lancelot who hath come  
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain  
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,  
And ridd'n away to die?" So feared the King,  
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.  
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,  
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.  
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed, 570  
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"  
"Nay, but one like him." "Why that like was he."  
And when the King demanded how she knew,  
Said, "Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us,  
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk  
That men went down before his spear at a touch,  
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name  
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name  
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this end  
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound, 580  
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn  
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd:  
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,  
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory.' "

Then replied the King:

“Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.  
Surely his King and most familiar friend  
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed, 590  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains  
But little cause for laughter: his own kin—  
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this!—  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;  
So that he went sore wounded from the field:  
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are mine  
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.  
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm 600  
A sleeve of scarlet, broider’d with great pearls,  
Some gentle maiden’s gift.”

“Yea, lord,” she said,  
“Thy hopes are mine,” and saying that, she choked,  
And sharply turn’d about to hide her face,  
Past to her chamber, and there flung herself  
Down on the great King’s couch, and writhed upon  
it,  
And clench’d her fingers till they bit the palm,  
And shriek’d out “Traitor!” to the unhearing wall,  
Then flash’d into wild tears, and rose again,  
And moved about her palace, proud and pale. 610

Gawain the while thro’ all the region round  
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,  
Touch’d at all points, except the poplar grove,



And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:  
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid  
Glanced at, and cried, "What news from Camelot,  
lord?

What of the knight with the red sleeve?" "He  
won."

"I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts  
Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath;  
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go; 620  
Thereon she smote her hand; wellnigh she swoon'd;  
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came  
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince  
Reported who he was, and on what quest  
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find  
The victor, but had ridd'n wildly round  
To seek him, and was wearied of the search.  
To whom the Lord of Astolat, "Bide with us,  
And ride no more at random, noble Prince!  
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield; 630  
This will he send or come for: furthermore  
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,  
Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince  
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine:  
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape,  
From forehead down to foot, perfect—again  
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:  
"Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!" 640  
And oft they met among the garden yews,  
And there he set himself to play upon her  
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height  
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,

Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence  
And amorous adulation, till the maid  
Rebell'd against it, saying to him, "Prince,  
O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight  
your King, 650  
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove  
No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went  
To all the winds?" "Nay, by mine head," said he,  
"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes:  
But an ye will it let me see the shield."  
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw  
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,  
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd; 660  
"Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true  
man!"  
"And right was I," she answer'd merrily, "I,  
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all."  
"And if *I* dream'd," said Gawain, "that you love  
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!  
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?"  
Full simple was her answer, "What know I?  
My brethren have been all my fellowship;  
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,  
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd, 670  
Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so myself—  
I know not if I know what true love is,  
But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
I know there is none other I can love."  
"Yea, by God's death," said he, "ye love him well,

But would not, knew ye what all others know,  
 And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,  
 And lifted her fair face and moved away:  
 But he pursued her, calling, "Stay a little!  
 One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve: 680  
 Would he break faith with one I may not name?  
 Must our true man change like a leaf at last?  
 Nay—like enow: why then, far be it from me  
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!  
 And, damsel, for I deem you know full well  
 Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave  
 My quest with you; the diamond also: here!  
 For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;  
 And if he love, it will be sweet to have it  
 From your own hand; and whether he love or not, 690  
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
 A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!  
 Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two  
 May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,  
 So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,  
 We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,  
 And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave.  
 The diamond, and all wearied of the quest  
 Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went  
 A true-love ballad, lightly rode away. 700

Thence to the court he past; there told the King  
 What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."  
 And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt;  
 But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all round  
 The region: but I lighted on the maid

Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her,  
 Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,  
 I gave the diamond: she will render it;  
 For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied, 710  
 "Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more  
 On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget  
 Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,  
 For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,  
 Linger'd that other, staring after him;  
 Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad  
 About the maid of Astolat, and her love.  
 All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were  
 loosed:

"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot, 720  
 Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."

Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all  
 Had marvel what the maid might be, but most  
 Prédoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame  
 Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.  
 She, that had heard the noise of it before,  
 But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,  
Marr'd her friend's point with pale tranquillity.

So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
 Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared: 730  
 Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice  
 Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,  
 And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
 Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat  
 With lips severely placid felt the knot



Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen  
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor  
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became  
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat, 740  
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,  
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,  
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,  
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault  
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,  
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"  
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore, let me  
hence,"

She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine."  
"Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine: 750  
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon  
Of him, and of that other." "Aye," she said,  
"And of that other, for I needs must hence  
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,  
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.  
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid. 760  
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,  
My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,  
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence,  
I pray you." Then her father nodding said,  
"Aye, aye, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,

Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,  
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—  
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high  
For any mouth to gape for save a Queen's—  
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,  
Being so very wilful you must go."

770

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,  
And while she made her ready for her ride,  
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,  
"Being so very wilful you must go,"  
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,  
"Being so very wilful you must die."

But she was happy enough and shook it off,  
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;  
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"

780

Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide  
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs  
To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
Came on her brother with a happy face  
Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
For pleasure all about a field of flowers:

Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,  
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,  
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot?"

790

How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?"  
But when the maid had told him all her tale,  
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods  
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,  
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,  
Past up the still rich city to his kin,  
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;

And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove  
 Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque 800  
 Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,  
 Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,  
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands  
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made them move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn, 810  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wonted in a place so still  
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,  
 "Your prize the diamond sent you by the King:"  
 His eyes glisten'd: she fancied "Is it for me?"  
 And when the maid had told him all the tale  
 Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest  
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt 820  
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child  
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face. *Simile.*  
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.  
 "Alas," he said, "your ride hath wearied you.  
 Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;  
 "Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."  
 What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,  
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her, 830  
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself

In the heart's colours on her simple face;  
And Lancelot look'd and was perplexed in mind,  
And being weak in body said no more;  
But did not love the colour; woman's love,  
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd  
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,  
And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates  
Far up the dim rich city to her kin; 840  
There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and  
past

Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,  
Thence to the cave: so day by day she past  
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
And likewise many a night: and Lancelot  
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt  
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times  
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem  
Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid 850  
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him  
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,  
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love  
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all  
The simples and the science of that time,  
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.  
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine, 860  
Would listen for her coming and regret  
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,



And loved her with all love except the love  
 Of man and woman when they love their best,  
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the death  
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
 And peradventure had he seen her first  
 She might have made this and that other world  
 Another world for the sick man; but now  
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,  
 His honour rooted in dishonour stood,  
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true. *only mean now*

870

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made  
 Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
 These, as but born of sickness, could not live;  
 For when the blood ran lustier in him again,  
 Full often the sweet image of one face,  
 Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
 Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.  
 Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace  
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,  
 Or short and coldly, and she knew right well  
 What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant  
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,  
 And drave her ere her time across the fields  
 Far into the rich city, where alone  
 She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it cannot be.  
 He will not love me: how then? must I die?"  
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
 That has but one plain passage of few notes,  
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
 For all an April morning, till the ear  
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
 Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"

880

890

*Simple*

And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,  
And found no ease in turning or in rest;  
And "Him or death," she mutter'd, "death or him,"  
Again and like a burthen, "Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,  
To Astolat returning rode the three. 900  
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self  
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,  
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought  
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."  
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid  
That she should ask some goodly gift of him  
For her own self or hers; "and do not shun  
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;  
Such service have ye done me, that I make 910  
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I  
In mine own land, and what I will I can."  
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,  
But like a ghost without the power to speak.  
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,  
And bode among them yet a little space  
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced  
He found her in among the garden yews,  
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,  
Seeing I go to-day:" then out she brake: 920  
"Going? and we shall never see you more.  
And I must die for want of one bold word."  
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."  
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:  
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me die."  
"Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot, "what is this?"

And innocently extending her white arms,  
 "Your love," she said, "your love—to be your wife."  
 And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chosen to wed,  
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine: 930  
 But now there never will be wife of mine."  
 "No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,  
 But to be with you still, to see your face,  
 To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."  
 And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the world, the world,  
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
 To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue  
 To blare its own interpretation—nay,  
 Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,  
 And your good father's kindness." And she said, 940  
 "Not to be with you, not to see your face—  
 Alas for me then, my good days are done."  
 "Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten times nay!  
 This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,  
 Most common: yea, I know it of mine own self:  
 And you yourself will smile at your own self  
 Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life  
 To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:  
 And then will I, for true you are and sweet,  
 Beyond mine old belief in womanhood, 950  
 More specially should your good knight be poor,  
 Endow you with broad land and territory,  
 Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,  
 So that would make you happy: furthermore,  
 Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,  
 In all your quarrels will I be your knight.  
 This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
 And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke  
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale  
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied: 960  
"Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,  
And thus they bore her swoonin~ to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew  
Their talk had pierced, her father: "Ay, a flash,  
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.  
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.  
I pray you use some rough discourtesy  
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,  
"That were against me: what I can I will;"  
And there that day remain'd and toward even 970  
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,  
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield;  
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,  
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd  
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.  
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;  
And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.  
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,  
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away. 980  
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:  
His very shield was gone; only the case,  
Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.  
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd  
And grew between her and the pictured wall.



Then came her father, saying in low tones,  
 "Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.  
 Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to thee,  
 Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all calm. 990  
 But when they left her to herself again,  
 Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field  
 Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls  
 Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt  
 Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
 Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

*pale yellow breaks  
the darkness.*

And in those days she made a little song,  
 And call'd her song "The Song of Love and Death,"  
 And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain; 1000  
 And sweet is death, who puts an end to pain:  
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:  
 Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.  
 O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,  
 Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,  
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;  
 I needs must follow death, who calls for me; 1010  
 Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,  
 All in a fiery dawning wild with wind

That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and  
thought

With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house  
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd  
The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn  
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know, 1020  
Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,  
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought  
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,  
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.  
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yesternight  
I seem'd a curious little maid again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,  
And when ye used to take me with the flood 1030  
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.  
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt  
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.  
And yet I cried because ye would not pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the King.  
And yet ye would not; but this night I dream'd  
That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will': 1040  
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.  
So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,

Until I find the palace of the King.  
 There will I enter in among them all,  
 And no man there will dare to mock at me;  
 But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,  
 And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;  
 Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,  
 Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one: 1050  
 And there the King will know me and my love,  
 And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
 And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
 And after my long voyage I shall rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, ye seem  
 Light-headed, for what force is yours to go  
 So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look  
 On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move  
 And bluster into stormy sobs and say, 1060  
 "I never loved him: an I meet with him,  
 I care not howsoever great he be,  
 Then will I strike at him and strike him down,  
 Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,  
 For this discomfort he hath done the house "

To whom the gentle sister made reply,  
 "Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,  
 Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault  
 Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
 Him of all men who seems to me the highest." 1070

" 'Highest?' " the father answer'd, echoing  
 "highest?"

(He meant to break the passion in her), "nay,  
 Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;  
 But this I know, for all the people know it,  
 He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:  
 And she returns his love in open shame.  
 If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:  
 "Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
 For anger: these are slanders: never yet 1080  
 Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
 He makes no friend who never made a foe.  
 But now it is my glory to have loved  
 One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,  
 My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,  
 Not all unhappy, having loved God's best  
 And greatest, tho' my love had no return:  
 Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
 Thanks, but you work against your own desire;  
 For if I could believe the things you say, 1090  
 I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,  
 Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man *holy spirit.*  
 Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,  
 She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,  
 Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
 A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd,  
 "Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?  
 Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,  
 "For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world, 1100  
 But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote  
 The letter she devised; which being writ



And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,  
Deny me not," she said—"ye never yet  
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,  
My latest: lay the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.  
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,  
Then take the little bed on which I died 1110  
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's  
For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
To take me to the river, and a barge  
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
There surely I shall speak for mine own self  
And none of you can speak for me so well.  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone 1120  
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he  
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon  
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death  
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh  
Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.  
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground, 1130  
Then, these two brethren slowly with bent brows  
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone

Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,  
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.  
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,  
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
So those two brethren from the chariot took  
And on the black decks laid her in her bed, 1140  
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
The silken case with braided blazonings,  
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her  
"Sister, farewell for ever," and again  
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.  
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,  
Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—  
In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—  
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold 1150  
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white  
All but her face, and that clear-featured face  
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved  
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,  
With deaths of others, and almost his own,  
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw 1160  
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen  
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed  
With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,  
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet

For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,  
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side, 1170  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,  
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, "Queen,  
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making them  
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:  
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it 1180  
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words,  
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,  
I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.  
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,  
Should have in it an absoluter trust  
To make up that defect: let rumors be:  
When did not rumors fly? these, as I trust  
That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen 1190  
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,  
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;  
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand  
Received at once and laid aside the gems  
There on a table near her, and replied:

“It may be, I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.  
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.  
This good is in it, whatsoe’er of ill, 1200  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite and wrong  
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?  
Diamonds for me ! they had been thrice their worth  
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.  
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver’s. Not for me !  
For her ! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart. 1210  
I doubt not that however changed, you keep  
So much of what is graceful: and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy  
In which as Arthur’s Queen I move and rule:  
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!  
A strange one ! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;  
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:  
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen’s  
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck 1220  
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—  
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—  
She shall not have them.”

Saying which she seized,  
And thro’ the casement standing wide for heat,



Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the  
 stream,  
 Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,  
 Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.  
 Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain 1230  
 At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,  
 Close underneath his eyes, and right across  
 Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge  
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
 Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away  
 To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,  
 On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.  
 There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to  
 whom,  
 All up the marble stair, tier over tier, 1240  
 Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd  
 "What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,  
 As hard and still as is the face that men  
 Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks  
 On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,  
 "He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,  
 Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair !  
 Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?  
 Or come to take the King to Fairyland?  
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot die, 1250  
 But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King  
 Came girt with knights: then turn'd the tongueless  
 man  
 From the half-face to the full eye, and rose

And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.  
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale  
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;  
And reverently they bore her into hall.  
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,  
And Lancelot later came and mused at her, 1260  
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her:  
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

“Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake.  
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
I loved you, and my love had no return,  
And therefore my true love has been my death.  
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere, 1270  
And to all other ladies, I make moan.  
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
Pray for my soul thou, too, Sir Lancelot,  
As thou art a knight peerless.”

Thus he read:

And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who read  
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,  
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all: 1280  
“My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,  
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death,  
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,  
But loved me with a love beyond all love

In woman, whomsoever I have known.  
 Yet to be loved makes not to love again;  
 Not at my years, however it hold in youth.  
 I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave  
 No cause, not willingly, for such a love:  
 To this I call my friends in testimony, 1290  
 Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
 Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,  
 To break her passion, some discourtesy  
 Against my nature: what I could, I did.  
 I left her and I bade her no farewell;  
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,  
 I might have put my wits to some rough use,  
 And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen  
 (Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)  
 "Ye might at least have done her so much grace, 1300  
 Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."  
 He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,  
 He adding:

"Queen, she would not be content  
 Save that I wedded her, which could not be.  
 Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;  
 It could not be. I told her that her love  
 Was but the flash of youth, would darken down  
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
 Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,  
 More specially were he she wedded poor, 1310  
 Estate them with large land and territory  
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,  
 To keep them in all joyance: more than this  
 I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,  
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,  
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm  
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went 1320  
The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,  
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.  
And when the knights had laid her comely head  
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb  
Be costly, and her image thereupon,  
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet 1330  
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb  
In letters gold and azure !" which was wrought  
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames  
And people, from the high door streaming, brake  
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart  
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, "Lancelot,  
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love." 1340  
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,  
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen for-  
given."  
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,  
Approach'd him, and with full affection said.



“Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have  
Most joy and most affiance, for I know  
What thou hast been in battle by my side,  
And many a time have watch’d thee at the tilt  
Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight,  
And let the younger and unskill’d go by 1350  
To win his honor and to make his name,  
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man  
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,  
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,  
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it  
seems,  
By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
If one may judge the living by the dead,  
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man,  
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons 1360  
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake.”

Then answer’d Lancelot, “Fair she was, my King,  
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.  
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—  
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound.”

“Free love, so bound, were freest,” said the King.  
“Let love be free; free love is for the best: 1370  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,  
What should be best, if not so pure a love

Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee  
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,  
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,  
And at the inrunning of a little brook  
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes  
And saw the barge that brought her moving down, 1380  
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
Low in himself, "Ah simple heart and sweet,  
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?  
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—  
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love?'  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?  
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,  
May not your crescent fear for name and fame,  
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes? 1390  
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?  
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,  
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
Caught from his mother's arms—the wondrous one  
Who passes thro' the vision of the night—  
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn  
She kiss'd me saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,  
As a king's son,' and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere. 1400  
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be !  
For what am I? what profits me my name  
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:  
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;

Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?  
 To make men worse by making my sin known?  
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?  
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
 Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break  
 These bonds that so defame me: not without 1410  
 She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? nay,  
 Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,  
 I pray him, send a sudden Angel down  
 To seize me by the hair and bear me far,  
 And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,  
 Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain.  
 Not knowing he should die a holy man.

—TENNYSON.

*Indic tetrameter.* ODE TO DUTY

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!  
 O Duty! if that name thou love *rather a hard name to be called*  
 Who art a light to guide, a rod  
 To check the erring, and reprove;  
 Thou who art victory and law  
 When empty terrors overawe: *not hard to do at all.* 5  
 From vain temptations dost set free;  
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity! *Always struggling*  
 There are who ask not if thine eye  
 Be on them; who, in love and truth, 10  
 Where no misgiving is, rely  
 Upon the genial sense of youth: *natural impulses.*  
 Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;  
 Who do thy work, and know it not:  
 Oh! if through confidence misplaced 15  
 They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them  
 cast.

*Victory and law. When we have followed the law of right and wrong we have victory of our groundless fears.*

- Serene will be our days and bright,  
 And happy will our nature be,  
 When love is an unerring light,  
 And joy its own security. ✓ 20  
 And they a blissful course may hold  
 Even now, who, not unwisely bold,  
 Live in the spirit of this creed ;  
 Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.
- I, loving freedom, and untried : *inexperience* 25  
 No sport of every random gust,  
 Yet being to myself a guide  
 Too blindly have reposed my trust :  
 And oft, when in my heart was heard  
 'Thy timely mandate, I deferred 30  
 The task, in smother walks to stray ;  
 But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.
- Through no disturbance of my soul, ✓  
 Or strong compunction in me wrought, *remorse*  
 I supplicate for thy control ; 35  
 But in the quietness of thought :  
 Me this unchartered freedom tires ;  
 I feel the weight of chance-desires ;  
 My hopes no more must change their name ;  
 I long for a repose that ever is the same. 40
- Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear  
 The Godhead's most benignant grace ;  
 Nor know we anything so fair  
 As is the smile upon thy face :  
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds 45  
 And fragrance in thy footing treads ;  
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;  
 And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh  
 and strong.



ELEGY, WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD 63

*side him* To humbler functions, awful Power! *full of faith*  
 I call thee : I myself commend 50  
 Unto thy guidance from this hour ;  
 Oh, let my weakness have an end !  
 Give unto me, made lowly wise, *humble*  
The spirit of self-sacrifice ;  
 The confidence of reason give ; 55  
 And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live !

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ELEGY, WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

*4/10* Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight, 5  
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,  
 The moping owl does to the moon complain 10  
 Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,  
 Molest her ancient solitary reign. ✓

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
Each in his narrow cell forever laid, 15  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,  
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;  
How jocund did they drive their team afield!  
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure; 30  
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Awaits alike th'inevitable hour, 35  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,  
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40

Can storied urn, or animated bust,  
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
 Or Flatt'ry sooth the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45  
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,  
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
 Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
 Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll; 50  
 Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,  
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;  
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, 55  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast  
 The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,  
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
 Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command  
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
 And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes.

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone 65  
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;  
 Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,  
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70  
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride  
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;  
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life 75  
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply;  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey, 85  
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires; 90  
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,  
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;  
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led, 95  
Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate,—



Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
 "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,  
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn: 100

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,  
 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
 His listless length at noontide would he stretch,  
 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn, 105  
 Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;  
 Now drooping woeful-wan, like one forlorn,  
 Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,  
 Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree; 110  
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next, with dirges due in sad array,  
 Slow through the church-way path we saw him  
 borne:—  
 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay 115  
 Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,  
 A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:  
 Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,  
 And Melancholy mark'd him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,  
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send ;  
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,  
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)  
The bosom of his Father and his God.

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## NOTES

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### GOLDSMITH

Oliver Goldsmith was born in 1728 in Pallas, a small village in Ireland, in which his father was "the village preacher." A few years afterwards the family removed to another village named Lissoy. Here Oliver was sent to school, and from here he went later to the university at Dublin. After his graduation—at the foot of his class—he spent some years in idle attempts to find a suitable profession; and at length, after spending a year in Edinburgh in the study of medicine, he set out for the continent on the pretext of furthering his studies. For more than a year he travelled on foot through Europe, and at length returned to London, with no money in his pocket, but with a doctor's degree, obtained no one knew where. During the next few years he was employed as a chemist's assistant, as an usher in a boarding school, and as a hack writer and reviewer for different publishers. His first great success came in 1764, with the publication of *The Traveller*. This was followed in 1766, by *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which had been written some years before. In 1768 he produced his first comedy, *The Good-Natured Man*, and its success encouraged him to write a few years later his second comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*. In the meantime, in 1770, *The Deserted Village* was published. In his early years in London, Goldsmith had had a hard struggle, but his genius was now recognized. He was well paid for his work and he enjoyed the society of the best wit and talent of his time, including Johnson, Garrick, Burke, Reynolds, and other celebrities. But in spite of the outward successes which Goldsmith enjoyed, he was constantly in difficulties because of his spendthrift habits, and his debts at length increased to such an extent as to cause him great mental depression. In 1774 he was attacked by an illness from which he did not rally. He died in April, 1774, and was buried in the ground of the Temple Church, London.

In personal appearance Goldsmith was not prepossessing. His form was ungainly; his features were irregular, and his face was marked with small-pox. In manner and conversation too he was awkward, and from childhood he appears to have been the object of good-natured ridicule by his friends. But whatever his personal short-comings may have been, they were more than redeemed by the ease and grace with which he expressed himself in writing. His style is clear and melodious, and his poetry and prose alike are marked by a delicacy of sentiment and a quaint humour which have assured him an enduring place in the affections of his readers. It has been said of him that he is the most beloved of English poets.

**Eighteenth Century Poetry.** The period which includes the first twenty-five or thirty years of the eighteenth century is commonly spoken of as the Age of Queen Anne. The chief aim of the poets of this period was to express themselves clearly and correctly. They wished to appeal to the intellect of the reader rather than his emotions, and they made no attempt to express their ideas in imaginative or poetical language. To the reader of that day poetry gave pleasure not because of delicate fancy or beauty of expression but because of its clear and pithy phrases and its well-balanced, well-polished lines. The writers of the period were interested chiefly in the life of the city, in the gossip of the coffee-houses and the clubs and the discussion of the religious and political questions of the day, and they showed little appreciation of the beautiful and had little or no interest in nature or in the life of the common people.

The form of verse which was most commonly used by these poets is known as the "heroic couplet." The heroic couplet consists of two rhyming lines, each of which contains five feet; for example:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,

Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

Each couplet contains a thought which is complete in itself, and the rhyme gives point and smartness of expression. It is



a form of verse which was admirably suited to the poets of the Age of Queen Anne who aimed at clearness and precision ; but it is seldom used by poets of the nineteenth century who wish to appeal to the imagination or the emotions of the reader.

Towards the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, a change began to take place in the character of poetry. Men began once more to take an interest in the lives of their fellow-men and to appreciate the beauty of nature. At the same time, too, there was a revival of interest in the past and in the people of other lands, and there were evidences of a gradual awakening of emotional and religious life. Indeed, one of the results of these emotional changes is seen in the tendency of the poets of the time to draw a moral from every incident or scene which they described.

The heroic couplet was, of course, not suited to the expression of emotions such as these, and gradually other forms of verse came into use. At the same time, there was a tendency among poets to use high-sounding phrases and stilted expressions which appear to us to be very artificial ; and instead of expressing their thoughts directly, they frequently made use of personification, and preferred to speak in the abstract, of types and classes of people rather than of particular individuals.

**Goldsmith's Literary Style.** Goldsmith belongs to the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* both bear evidence of the changes that were taking place in literary style. In *The Deserted Village* Goldsmith wishes to convince his readers of the evils of wealth and luxury that follow in "trade's unfeeling train"; and since he is making an appeal to the intellect, it is important that he should express himself clearly and concisely. Hence he uses the heroic couplet; but just because it is the warm-hearted Goldsmith who writes, his couplets are less hard and pointed, and more graceful, than those of the poets of the early part of the century. We find, too, in *The Deserted Village* the tendency to moralize that is common to writers of his time, and he frequently makes use of artificial and stilted phrases, and in expressing abstract truths he very frequently uses personification. But at the same time, in spite of all its moralizing, *The*

*Deserted Village* is a poem of the heart rather than of the intellect. Goldsmith's sympathies go out to the humble people and simple pleasures of his own boyhood. His imagination lingers fondly over each detail, and it is to the mingled humor and pathos with which he describes these humble scenes that the poem owes its lasting charm.

**The Deserted Village.** At the time when Goldsmith wrote *The Deserted Village* a great agricultural revolution was taking place in England. Under the older system of agriculture the land was not divided up into farms, each with its separate owner or tenant, as at the present time. The peasants who tilled the soil lived, for the most part, in the village. The land immediately outside the village was divided into three great fields, enclosed by hedges. In one of these fields fall crops were sown, in another, spring crops. The third field was left fallow, or uncultivated, and was used for pasture; and each year a different field was set apart as fallow land. Each of the cultivated fields was divided into long rectangular strips, and each of these small strips was allotted to one of the villagers. Beyond these three fields was the open country or "commons" on which the villagers grazed their cattle, horses, and sheep.

Such a system of farming as this was very wasteful, partly because much of the land remained untilled, and partly because the soil soon became worn-out and produced poor crops. But while the population of the country was scanty the farmers were able to produce sufficient food to supply their needs. Early in the eighteenth century, however, the population of England increased rapidly, and it soon became evident that if larger crops were to be produced, new methods of farming must be employed, and that a larger area of ground must be brought under cultivation.

Under these conditions it was inevitable that the old three-field system of farming must gradually disappear. Early in the eighteenth century the wealthier landowners began to buy up the small holdings and at the same time Acts of Parliament were passed giving certain individuals the right to "enclose" parts of the commons. In this way there came into existence

large estates; the commons became private property; and many of the smaller villages entirely disappeared. It is these changes that Goldsmith deplures in *The Deserted Village*; and in telling the story of "Sweet Auburn", Goldsmith is merely giving a description of what was taking place in the English countryside in his own day.

It should be remembered, however, that in *The Deserted Village* Goldsmith is stating only one side of the case. Under the three-field system the ordinary English, or Irish, village was not the scene of such happiness and contentment as is described in the poem. The peasant farmers lived in poverty, and much want and misery existed. It is true that the enclosures of land in some cases merely served to create a "park" for the wealthy landowner. It is true also that the enclosures brought hardship and suffering to many people. But, on the whole, as a result of the agricultural revolution, production was greatly increased and better methods of farming were employed than before. It should be remembered also that the misfortunes which overtook the villagers, especially towards the close of the century, were not wholly due to the enclosures, but were largely the result of other causes, such as the industrial revolution and the long war with France.

#### NOTES ON THE DESERTED VILLAGE

1. Auburn. It is probable that Goldsmith had in mind the village of Lissoy, in Ireland, in which his boyhood was spent.

6. Seats. Haunts.

12. decent. Becoming, comely.

25. simply. In this simple fashion.

32. Even toil was pleasing when it was varied by sports such as these.

35. lawn. The open country, the plain.

40. The cheerfulness of the country is lessened (stinted) because the land is only half tilled.

42. sedges. Grass-like water-plants.

44. hollow-sounding bittern. A wading bird, belonging to the heron family, which makes a dismal booming or drumming sound.

45. lapwing. A bird belonging to the plover family.
52. men decay. The population decreases.
59. It required only a moderate amount of labour to produce a wholesome supply of food from the soil.
63. trade's unfeeling train. Those who have become rich through commerce, and who have no regard for the feelings of those whom they dispossess.
66. This line suggests that the rich landowner finds his wealth somewhat of a burden.
67. Wealth brings with it many wants which the poor man does not feel.
68. His foolish pride makes him do things which he does not really enjoy.
69. Because they had sufficient (plenty) to supply their wants, time passed quietly and happily.
70. that ask'd but little room. That could be satisfied without crowding other people out.
72. Liv'd in each look. The effect of the healthful sports was seen in their cheerful looks.
74. manners. Customs, modes of living.
75. parent of the blissful hour. The source of happiness.
76. The desolate (forlorn) scenes are evidence of the rich man's power.
81. her busy train. The succession (train) of scenes and incidents.
82. Makes my breast swell with emotion and makes me think of the past with regret.
105. in guilty state. It is a crime for the porter to appear in such a splendid livery while people are begging for food.
115. careless. Free from care.
122. vacant. Free from care.
128. bloomy flush. The fullness (flush) of life in the bloom of youth.
129. thing. So feeble and decrepit that she can scarcely be called a woman.



130. *plashy*. Covering the ground with little pools.

132. *mantling*. Covering the surface of the brook.

136. *the pensive plain*. The plain is said to be *pensive* because it makes one pensive, that is, fills one with melancholy thoughts, to see how desolate it is.

140. *The village preacher*. In this picture of the village preacher Goldsmith pays a tribute, no doubt, to the memory of his brother, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, whose death had occurred a short time before *The Deserted Village* was written.

146. By changing his doctrines to suit changes in public opinion or changes in political conditions.

159. *learn'd to glow*. His feelings of sympathy were aroused.

162. He helped them, not from a sense of duty, but because he pitied them.

172. Where sorrow, guilt, and pain in turn dismayed the dying man.

179. *with double sway*. It was doubly effective because preached by a man so earnest and sincere as he.

194. *furze*. A prickly shrub with bright yellow blossoms.  
*unprofitably gay*. Because it grows on waste ground and produces no fruit.

196. *The village master*. It is supposed that Goldsmith has here given a description of the schoolmaster of Lissoy, Thomas Byrne by name, to whom he went to school as a boy.

209. *terms and tides presage*. He could calculate at what time the sessions of the law-courts (*terms*) would be held and upon what dates church holidays or festivals (*tides*) would fall.

210. *gauge*. Measure the contents of casks.

225. The poet's imagination generally deals with loftier things than the inn-parlour; hence it is said to "stoop."

231. *use*. Perhaps to cover up holes in the walls.

232. *The twelve good rules*. Twelve rules of conduct supposedly drawn up by Charles I.; the following are examples:—"Reveal no secrets;" "Pick no quarrels;" "Lay no wagers."

232. the royal game of goose. A game played with dice on a board divided into squares, like a checker-board; so called because on every fourth and fifth square a goose was painted. The word *royal* is merely a general word of praise.

234. fennel. A fragrant plant.

244. woodman. Here, a hunter.

248. mantling bliss. Foaming ale. See note on l. 132.

prest. Coaxed to taste the cup.

252. the lowly train. The peasantry.

254. the gloss of art. Artificial show.

255-6. Natural pleasures take a strong hold on the mind.

259. pomp. Used here with its original meaning of "a procession."

260. wanton wealth. Used to satisfy the changing whims of the owner.

278. equipage. Carriages.

279. silken. An example of transferred epithet. It is really the *robe* that is "silken."

279-80. As a result of his wealth, which enables him to live in such luxury, the neighbouring fields are only partly tilled. See line 40.

281-2. The cottage is removed to make room for his mansion and grounds (seat).

283. The products that are needed to support the population at home, are exported in exchange for luxuries from distant countries.

287. female. This word was formerly used in many cases where we now use the word *woman*.

288. Secure to please. Sure of pleasing.

290. Her beauty alone wins admiration, without the artificial aid of dress.

293. solicitous to bless. Anxious to bestow favours.

294. the glaring impotence of dress. Dress, no matter how gaudy, is in itself powerless to win admiration.

304. contiguous pride. Proud and wealthy neighbours.

312. To pamper luxury. To provide luxuries to excess.

316. artist. Artisan, workman.

317. long-drawn pomps. Long processions.

318. Public executions, for trivial offences, were very common in Goldsmith's time.

322. torches. There were no street lights, and on dark nights people who could afford it engaged torch-bearers to show the way.

335. idly first. When first she was tempted to go to the city she did not think seriously of its dangers.

336. wheel. Spinning-wheel.

344. wild Altama. The Altamaha river, in Georgia.

346. horrid. Perhaps with a suggestion of its literal meaning, bristling, shaggy, rough.

352. gathers death. Collects its venom from the poisonous plants.

355. tigers. The jaguar, or American tiger.

368. seats. Homes, haunts.

373. in conscious virtue brave. He was brave enough to face death because he knew that he had lived a good life.

390. a florid vigour. The ruddy (florid) appearance, due to intoxicants, is not a sign of real health.

404. connubial tenderness. The affection of husband and wife.

410. To appeal to the best feelings of the reader, or to try to win honest fame.

412. Since people looked upon poetry as a worthless art (decried it), he was ashamed to be known as a poet; but when alone (solitary) he took pleasure in poetry.

414. keep'st me so. Because the poet was poorly paid for his work.

415. The painter, musician, orator, etc., are inspired by poetry to choose lofty subjects and do their finest work.

418. **Torno.** Tornea or Torneo is the name of a river which forms part of the boundary line between Sweden and Russia.

**Pambamarca.** The name of a mountain in Ecuador, near the town of Quito.

422. **Redress the rigours.** Make up for the severity.

428. **the labour'd mole.** The mound, or breakwater, built at the mouth of a harbour to protect it from the waves.

429. **self-dependent.** Producing all that is sufficient for its own needs.

427-30. These four lines were written by Dr. Johnson.

### QUESTIONS

1. Why is "sweet Auburn" so dear to the poet?
2. What are the causes that have led to its being "deserted"?
3. "O blest retirement! friend to life's decline."  
(a) What leads the poet to speak of retirement and old age?  
(b) What does he say regarding his own hopes of retirement?
4. Why does Goldsmith describe the village preacher, the schoolmaster, and the village inn, in so much detail?
5. What is Goldsmith's opinion as to the effect of trade on the life of the nation?
6. What comparison does Goldsmith make between the pleasures of the country and those of the town?
7. What is your opinion of the picture which Goldsmith paints of the life of the peasants in Auburn and in America respectively?
8. What, according to Goldsmith, are the effects of luxury upon the individual and upon the nation?
9. State in simple language Goldsmith's estimate of the value of poetry.
10. Give examples of humour and of pathos as found in the poem.



# NOTES

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## TENNYSON

**The Life of Tennyson.**—Tennyson was born in 1809 in the little village of Somersby in Lincolnshire. He was one of a family of twelve, seven boys and five girls, the children of Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, the village rector. He received his early education in the village school and at the grammar school at Louth, but his later boyhood was spent at home, reading, studying, and rambling in the neighbourhood. At the age of nineteen he went to Cambridge University, but left three years later without graduating. In 1832 he published a volume of poems, but because of some unfavourable criticism he published nothing more for ten years. Two volumes which appeared in 1842, however, firmly established his reputation as a poet. His next important work was *The Princess*, which was published in 1847; but it was misunderstood, and added little to his reputation at the time. The year 1850 was an important year in Tennyson's life. In that year he published *In Memoriam*, and in the same year he was appointed poet-laureate. In this year also he was married to Miss Emily Sellwood. For three years they lived in Twickenham, then a suburb of London, but in 1853 they removed to Farringford in the Isle of Wight. This was the poet's home for sixteen years. Then in 1869 he built a residence at Aldworth, near Haslemere in Surrey, where he lived for the remainder of his life. In the meantime *Maud* was published in 1855, and in 1869 four of the *Idylls* appeared. In 1869 four others were added, but it was not until 1885 that the series of twelve idylls was complete. In 1884 he accepted a baronetcy, and was henceforth known as Lord Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford. The latter part of his life was devoted very largely to the production of dramatic poetry, but he also produced some of his finest lyrics in his later years. He died in October, 1892, and was buried in the Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.

**Literary Style.**—Tennyson's literary style is best described by the term "ornate". He is at his best in those subjects which lend themselves to pictorial effect and richness of imagery; and he

carefully embellishes and elaborates his poems down to the minutest details. He is a lyric and idyllic poet, and he excels in those passages which require delicacy of touch and the expression of finer shades of feeling. Few poets have equalled him in the command of graceful and felicitous expression and in the power of producing exquisite musical effects. In thought and sentiment Tennyson represents the conservative middle class in England, with their respect for law and order and their adherence to the established order of things.

**The Arthurian Legends.**—The Arthurian legends are very old. Much of the romance that is associated with King Arthur may be traced to early Celtic myths. It is believed that there was a Celtic warrior who lived during the time of the Saxon invasion (450-510) and fought against the invaders; but little else is known of him. Gradually, however, there grew up numerous legends and traditions with Arthur as the central figure; and early in the twelfth century the story of the Round Table came into existence. During the following centuries many different versions of the story appeared; and in the year 1470 an Englishman named Sir Thomas Malory published a volume entitled *Morte D'Arthur* in which he told the story of the Round Table as found in various legends. Tennyson drew his material for his *Idylls* almost entirely from Malory's account. In the story of *The Holy Grail*, however, he has drawn very largely on his own imagination for his details. The portrayal of the monk Ambrosius, the story of the quest of Sir Bors, and the utterances of Arthur, are, for example, almost entirely Tennyson's own.

**The Idylls of the King.** An Idyll is a poem of a highly decorative, pictorial character, containing a simple story of pastoral or primitive life. Very frequently, too, the story contains a moral lesson, or is capable of a spiritual interpretation. Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, for example, tells the story of an "old order" of things in England; but behind the story there lies a spiritual meaning; and Tennyson himself speaks of it as an "old imperfect tale, new-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul". But in general, the reading of an idyll gives greater pleasure if we do not look too closely at the allegorical or spiritual meaning, but are content to enjoy the story for its own sake.

*The Idylls of the King* consists of twelve books, in which the story is told of the rise and decline of the Round Table from the coming of Arthur until his death. The first of the idylls, *The Coming of Arthur*, tells of the founding of the Order of the Round Table, with Arthur as king. The second idyll, *Gareth and Lynette*, shows the Round Table at its best, before any taint of sin had entered into it. In the third and fourth idylls, *The Marriage of Geraint*, and *Geraint and Enid* there is a whisper of Lancelot's guilty love for Queen Guinevere, which is finally to prove the ruin of the Round Table. The next two idylls, *Balin and Balan*, and *Merlin and Vivien* show that the evil influence of Lancelot's sin is already making itself felt; and in the latter idyll the enchanter Merlin falls a prey to the wiles of Vivien. In *Lancelot and Elaine*, Lancelot has an opportunity to cast aside his sin, but he fails to do so and his failure brings disaster. In the eighth idyll *The Holy Grail*, the crisis is reached. In the midst of the growing corruption of the Court, there comes a sudden revival of enthusiasm for spiritual things. But the revival is not productive of lasting results; for, although Lancelot in his "madness" wrestles with his sin, he fails to throw it aside, and instead of purifying and strengthening the Round Table, the quest of the Holy Grail has the effect of weakening it still further. The three following idylls *Pelleas and Ettarre*, *The Last Tournament*, and *Guinevere* tell the story of the final decay of the Round Table; and in the last idyll of all, *The Passing of Arthur*, "the whole Round Table is dissolved", and Arthur passes away to "the island-valley of Avilion".

**Lancelot and Elaine.** The story of Lancelot and Elaine was first published in 1859 under the title of *Elaine* in the volume of *The Idylls of the King* containing the four poems *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*. At this time Tennyson apparently had no thought of developing the series of Idylls as we now have them, and these four poems were intended merely as four studies of female character. Later, however, when other idylls were added and the epic appeared in its present form, Tennyson evidently thought that the title *Lancelot and Elaine* was more suitable than the older title, and it was changed accordingly.

The most important character in the story is Lancelot, and it is his spiritual struggle that constitutes the chief interest in the idyll. Lancelot is, except for his one sin, the greatest of Arthur's knights, and as portrayed by Tennyson he has all the characteristics of the ideal knight of mediaeval romance. So great is his prowess in the lists that it is said that men go down before his spear at a touch; and in the tournaments, "king, duke, earl, count, baron,—whom he smote, he overthrew". Arthur speaks of him, too, as the knight in whom he has "most trust and most affiance", and loves him for his courtesies. He is a "kindly man moving among his kind", and except for his one great sin, there is nothing mean or false in his nature. But with all these knightly qualities, his skill in the tournament, his grace and courtesy, and nobility of character, he cannot throw aside his sin; and it with a picture of Lancelot sitting "at the inrunning of a little brook" in the agony of spiritual conflict, that the story fitly ends.

The two characters next in importance to Lancelot are Elaine and Guinevere. Tennyson has, no doubt, intended that they should stand in direct contrast to one another. Elaine, sweet, pure, innocent, "delicately pure and marvellously fair", is a simple and almost childlike figure. Guinevere is a mature woman, strong-willed and passionate, and queenly in bearing, yet not wholly unlovable in spite of her disloyalty to Arthur. Elaine is the snow-drop and Guinevere is the rose, someone has said, and the comparison is not unapt.

Of the remaining characters in the story little need be said. The blunt, moody Sir Torre; the modest gentle, lovable Lavaine; the traitor Modred; Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, "courtesy with a touch of traitor in it"; the clear-faced trustful King, loving glory and filled with "the fire of God" in battle with the heathen,—these are the lesser figures that fill up the canvas in which Lancelot, Elaine and Guinevere occupy the most important place.

#### NOTES ON LANCELOT AND ELAINE

2. lily maid. The word "lily" suggests not only fairness of complexion, but also purity of character. See ll. 1141-1149.



**Astolat.** Malory identifies Astolat with Guildford in Surrey, which is situated on the river Wey, a tributary of the Thames.

4. **sacred.** Sacred to her because of her worship of Lancelot.

8. **braided.** Embroidered.

9. **blazon'd.** Depicted in colours.

10. **their own tinct.** Their proper tints, or colours.  
of her wit. Of her own invention.

11. **fantasy.** Fanciful design.

16. **read.** Studied, interpreted.

17. **arms.** Coat-of-arms.

22. **Caerlyle.** Carlisle in Cumberland. "Caer" means castle.

23. **Caerleon.** On the river Usk in South Wales.

**Camelot.** The capital of Arthur's kingdom. If such a city as Camelot ever existed, it is probable that it stood on the site now occupied by the village of Queen Camel, in Somersetshire. Malory, however, identifies it with Winchester.

31. **jousts (pr. justs).** Tournaments.

35. **Lyonnesse.** A stretch of country which, according to fable, formerly connected Cornwall and the Scilly Isles, but which has been submerged by the sea.

"A land of old upheaven from the abyss  
By fire, to sink into the abyss again."

44. **lichen'd.** Covered with fine moss, or "lichen."

46. **aside.** On each side.

48. **all.** Altogether, wholly.

53. **shingly scaur.** Sloping rock covered with pebbles(shingle).

59. **Divinely.** By divine guidance.

65. **the heathen.** The Saxons.

67. **still.** On every occasion.

69. Lancelot was in love with the Queen, and the Queen with Lancelot, and it was this sinful love that eventually brought ruin to the Round Table.

75. **Hard on.** Close beside.  
the place, etc. London.

76. let proclaim. Caused to be proclaimed.
82. lists. The enclosure within which the tournament was held.
91. tale. Number.
94. lets me. Hinders me.
107. There are so many crickets that each blade of grass seems to have a voice.
108. nothing. Of no account, insignificant.
- 110-1. allow'd of. Approved by. The word "allow" meaning "to approve" is derived from the Latin *allaudare*, to praise (see l. 152). The word "allow" meaning "to permit" is a different word, and is derived from the Latin *allocare*, to assign.
115. pledged us. Drunk our health.
118. devoir. Duty as a knight.
122. passionate. Passionate in his enthusiasm for his ideals, but not as a lover. There is a touch of contempt in Guinevere's words.
125. untruth. Disloyalty.
126. only. But.
128. else. Otherwise.
133. must have a touch of earth. Must have some faults; must be more like an ordinary human being.
134. the low sun. The sun near the horizon, in contrast to "the sun in heaven" (l. 123).
135. the bond. Of marriage.
145. He never does wrong, and because of that he is simple, like a child. Hence he does not know how to rule others.  
craft. Here, practical skill, as in "state craft."
147. wit. Here, sharpness or ingenuity in making an excuse.
157. They prove . . . work. They prove that his knights are better warriors because of his inspiration and training.
160. barren-beaten. Beaten so hard by travel that nothing would grow on it.

161. show'd the rarer foot. ' Showed that it was travelled more rarely.

162. downs. Low grassy hills.

165. links. Windings.

181. livest between the lips. Are you known. The expression is borrowed from Virgil.

181-2. state and presence. Distinguished appearance and noble bearing.

193. device. Emblem, coat-of-arms.

196. This line is explained by a passage from *Gareth and Lynette*:

"When some good knight had done one noble deed,  
His arms were carven only; but if twain  
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none  
The shield was blank and bare without a sign  
Saving the name beneath."

201. Allow him. Make allowance for him. The father apologizes to Sir Lancelot for the rudeness of Sir Torre.

208. play'd on. Made sport of.

211-3. A forecast of two incidents that appear later in the story. See ll. 696-8, and 1225-9.

214. belike. Probably.

218. an if. In Middle English *and* was sometimes used in the sense of "if". In the course of time it become contracted to "an" and at length it came to be used along with "if" for the sake of additional force.

222. So ye will grace me. If you will favour me.

227. if ye may. "May" is here used with its original meaning of "can," or "are able."

235. return'd. Replied.

236-40. Lancelot says, in effect, that he considers Elaine very beautiful. It is the condition contained in l. 237 that makes his judgment "rash".

240. Without violating the condition already laid down (the bond), that beautiful things are only for beautiful people.

247. on such heights. With one of so high a rank as the Queen.

252. who . . . soul. Because his conscience was still alive and he was capable of remorse.

259. was her doom. Meant death for her.

263. a smaller time. Less heroic times.

269. glanced at. Chanced to mention.

270. suddenly speaking, etc. He quickly changed the subject. the wordless man. See l. 169.

279. Badon Hill. The battle of Mount Badon was fought in the year 520.

280. rapt. Carried away.

281. passion. Here, worship.

285-301. Tennyson gives here the list of battles mentioned by Nennius (a Latin writer of the eighth or ninth century) in his History of the Britons. Of these battles, that of Mount Badon is the only one which is known to have actually taken place. The others are legendary. The identity of most of the places mentioned in the passage is largely a matter of conjecture.

293. cuirass. Breastplate.

295. that lightened, etc. Caught the light and sparkled as his breast moved in breathing.

297-8. The language is figurative. The White Horse was the emblem of the Saxons. The assaults (or perhaps the battle-cries) of the Saxons were so fierce that the very walls of the castle trembled.

319. traits of pleasantry. Talk which contained touches of mirth.

325. make him cheer. To make cheer for him. "Cheer" is a noun.

327. of manners and of nature. He was not only gentle in disposition, but he had also been trained to show courtesy.

333. The face is the outward form (the shape and colour) which shows the character of the man,—what his thoughts are and what kind of life he has led.



338. *rathe*. Early. The word is now used only in poetry, but the comparative form *rather* has survived in everyday speech. It was formerly used to express time, but now expresses preference only. Compare the uses of the word "sooner".

347. *flattering*. Caressing.

352. *sacred fear*. "Fear" lest in her innocence she should have conceived a sudden passion for him which he could not return; "sacred" because it arose from what was best in his own nature.

354. *rapt*. Wholly absorbed in gazing.

356. *favour*. A token of her favour. It was customary for a knight to wear, usually on his helmet, some token, such as a glove or scarf, given to him by his lady-love.

357. She summoned up courage to ask for his consent, in spite of the violent beating of her heart.

380-1. *A grace . . . squire*. You have shown me a favour twice to-day. I will be your shield-bearer (squire).

386. *Once, twice, and thrice*. Kissing her three times.

396. *and so lived in fantasy*. See l. 27. The repetition of the phrase brings the reader back to the point at which the story began.

403. *white rock*. Chalk of which the downs are formed.

415. *Lancelot of the Lake*. See ll. 1393-4.

422. *Pendragon*. The dragon was the emblem of the Britons. The Pendragon is literally "the dragon's head"; hence, the King.

430. *clear-faced*. With clear-cut features, or with clear complexion; the expression also suggests purity of character.

431. *samite*. A silk cloth, shot through with threads of gold and silver.

438. *fled*. Appearing almost as if alive and moving.

438-9. *found the new design*. Were merged into a different pattern in another part of the chair.

446. *crescent*. Growing in years and in skill.

447. overcome. Surpass.

449. to know well. Which consists in knowing well.

451. in rest. With the end resting in the socket provided for it at the back of the saddle.

467. overdo. Surpass.

469-70. Not only his strength, but his graceful movements and many-sided skill.

486. Down-glancing. Slipping down from the surface of his armour.

489. worshipfully. Worthy of praise.

493. to do . . . endure. To fight as long as he could endure the pain, or as long as his strength would last.

502-3. Diamond me no diamonds. Do not speak of diamonds to me.

520. rumour. Common talk.

525. marches. Border country lying between petty kingdoms and hence laid waste by war.

545. bring us what he is. Bring us word as to who he is and what rank he holds.

548. a restless heart. Flashing in the sunlight it seemed to move.

554. Tristram appears in *The Last Tournament*; Geraint, in *Geraint and Enid*. For "Lamorack" Tennyson in a later edition substituted Gareth, the hero of *Gareth and Lynette*.

Gawain and Modred are the sons of Lot, king of Orkney, and of Bellicent, who is Arthur's half-sister. Bellicent is always loyal to Arthur, but her husband, Lot, was one of those who rebelled against Arthur when he became King. Gawain is represented in the Idylls as a brave and courteous knight, but shallow and insincere and lacking in serious purpose. Modred is the "villain" of the Idylls, crafty and malicious, and a traitor to both the Round Table and the King.

583-5. See ll. 151-3.

591. Although I know that my knights are subject to fancies and caprices.

592. So fine a fear. Fear regarding a matter so trivial.  
large. Not dwelling on trivial things.

615. enamell'd arms. Armour painted so as to make it  
glitter.

634. Accorded. Agreed.

635. Although outwardly he was so courteous, yet he was  
not wholly to be trusted.

639. turn'd. Like some perfectly shaped object produced  
artificially on a turning-lathe.

640. yews. Evergreens.

642. He tried deliberately to see what effect he could pro-  
duce.

643. from a height above her. Because he was a courtier and  
she "a simple maid."

653. hern. Heron. The falcon is a species of hawk used in  
hunting. It is "slipped" at its prey when it is unhooded and  
freed from the leash by which it is held.

653-4. went to all the winds. Flew in all directions instead  
of pursuing the heron.

657. An ye will it. If you wish it.

660. Ramp in the field. A technical phrase used in heraldry.  
The lions are "ramp," or rampant, when they are standing  
erect on the hind feet as if attacking an enemy. The "field"  
is the background on which the coat-of-arms is emblazoned.

668. all my fellowship. My only companions.

680. One . . . grace. Grant me as a favour one minute  
more. Why "golden"?

700. lightly. In a light-hearted mood.

707. Believing that if we do what courtesy requires, we are  
acting for the best.

713. Gawain had shown discourtesy to the King by not  
obeying his commands.

726. noise. Rumour.

727. but. Only. The only answer that the Queen gave to the "old dame" was that she was sorry "that Lancelot should have stoop'd so low."

728. Marr'd her friend's point. Spoiled the effect which the old dame intended to produce by her story.

735. lips severely placid. Set firmly so as to show no emotion.  
the knot. The muscles contracting under the tense strain felt like a knot.

739. wormwood. A plant that is very bitter to the taste.

745. See l. 205.

778. must die. Because her love was not returned.

794. in his moods. In one of his fits of sullenness.

795. gate. Described in *Gareth and Lynette*, ll. 209-226.

796. mystically. With a symbolic meaning.

800. casque. Helmet.

807. battle-writhen. With muscles knotted with fighting.

835. But did . . . colour. Because her deepened colour told him that she was in love with him.

844. either twilight. Early morning and evening; "either" in the sense of "both."

851. forbore him. Bore with him, was patient.

857. simples. Medicinal herbs.

865. had died. Would have died.

870. straiten'd. Limited, confined.

871. He could not be fully loyal to the King because of his love for Guinevere, in which he was dishonourable.

872. In order to keep faith with Guinevere he must be unfaithful to the King; hence he was "falsely true" to her.

878. a treacherous quiet. While dwelling on the image of her face he forgot all else. This moment of "quiet" was "treacherous" because it meant that because of it he would not be able to keep his resolution.

880. ghostly grace. Beautiful vision,—the image of Guinevere.



898. burthen. Refrain.

905. the victim's flowers. An allusion to the custom, in ancient times, of adorning the victim with garlands of flowers, before sacrifice.

914. According to common belief, a ghost could not speak unless first spoken to.

935. Lancelot uses "the world" in the sense of "the people of the world."

936. all ear and eye. Hearing and seeing everything; nothing escapes it.

a stupid heart, etc. Unable to understand others or sympathize with them.

938. to blare. To sound abroad, to proclaim. Used ordinarily in speaking of the sound of a trumpet.

939. quit. Requite.

953. According to Malory, Lancelot's ancestral estates were in Brittany, France.

963. walls of yew. Hedges. See l. 918.

977. tact. Instinct.

986. pictured. Covered with tapestry.

994-6. mixt her fancies, etc. She let her fancies dwell on everything that was gloomy or melancholy in her surroundings.

995. sallow-rifted glooms. The dark clouds in the evening sky were broken with streaks of pale-yellowish colour.

999. make. Compose; a common use of the word in olden English.

1013. all. An adverbial particle which gives additional force to the line.

1015-6. The belief in phantoms or apparitions which gave warning of death was common in earlier times.

1019. shrilling. Singing in a shrill voice.

1022. a wonder. A strange-sounding word.

1027-8. yesternight . . . again. That is, in her dream. See l. 1038.

1028. curious. Whose childish fancies they did not understand..

1081. ignoble talk. Gossip and slander.

1084. pass. Die.

1085. howsoe'er . . . you. Although you may think me unhappy.

1092. ghostly man. Priest. "Ghostly" here means "spiritual."

1093. shrive. Hear confession and grant absolution, or forgiveness of sin.

1115. barge. A stately vessel; to be distinguished from the common "barge" used in carrying merchandise.

1125. That she only fancied she was going to die, and that there was no physical cause for her death.

1129. dole. Mourning.

1131. bent brows. Heads bowed, or, perhaps, brows contracted with grief.

1134. pall'd. Covered with a pall or funeral cloth.

1136. creature. Servant.

1147. the flood. The tide.

1158. hard won. Won with difficulty.

hardly won. Only just won, barely won. Lancelot was almost overcome in the struggle.

1170. oriel. A large projecting window.

1177-8. A cygnet, or young swan, is of a dark ashy-blue colour. The Queen's neck is so white that, compared with it, the swan's neck would seem even darker than the cygnet's.

tawny. Yellowish brown; tanned.

1179. your beauty is your beauty. Nothing more can be said, of it. It is beyond the power of words to describe.

1181-2. Such sin . . . pardon. Lancelot says, half jestingly, that they both have sinned in the words of love which they have spoken to each other; and hence Guinevere should be ready to forgive him for his "sin in words".

1183. rumours. See ll. 719-30.

1190. It is the Queen who is "half turn'd away".

1202. done despite. Shown malice.

1206. your own. Your own worth.

1207-8. To those who are false and fickle, a gift is merely a gift, no matter from whom it comes; but to those who are faithful to their friends, a gift is of greater value when it is given by some one whom we hold in high esteem.

1221-2. as a faith, etc. Guinevere means that Lancelot's continued loyalty would have meant more to her than this gift of diamonds.

1224. or hers or mine, etc. No matter whether they are hers or mine, they are mine now to do as I please with.

1249-50. See *The Passing of Arthur*, ll. 360-440. This was a common belief with regard to other heroes besides Arthur.

1256-7. Sir Percivale, Sir Galahad. Two of the most important characters in *The Holy Grail*.

1259.63. See ll. 1045-53.

1265. sometime. Formerly.

1283. Right heavy. Much grieved.

1298. from herself. From her unfortunate passion.

1299. After a storm ceases the sea still remains rough for a time. The storm of Guinevere's wrath had passed, but she was still resentful.

1316. worship. Honour.

1319. that shrine. The church that stood where Westminster Abbey now stands.

1346. affiance. Trust.

1354. the homeless trouble. Arthur sees that Lancelot is troubled, and he thinks that it is because he is "a lonely man" (l. 1359).

1365. to want an eye. To be unable to appreciate beauty.

1368. him. Love.

1369. **Free love . . . freest.** This thought is expressed in another form in Tennyson's *Oenone*, and in Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*. Arthur says, in effect, that the man who is bound by marriage to one whom he loves is the "freest" man, because he is not the prey of conflicting passions. In this sense Lancelot was not free.

1385. **now at last.** He had refused to say farewell to her when leaving Astolat.

1387. Lancelot suspects that Guinevere no longer really loves him, but that because of her pride she does not want to have it said that she has lost him.

1389. **crescent.** Increasing.

1391-2. The king had spoken of him as "the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake" (l. 1362); but this name seemed a reproach to him because it reminded him that he had not attained the higher spiritual life of which his early years gave promise.

1393. **The Lady of the Lake.** The Lady of the Lake symbolizes the spiritual nature of man, or rather the spiritual principle present in all life. The spiritual is always mysterious; hence the mystery of The Lady of the Lake. She dwells in secret places, by the winding waters and the dusky mere; her voice is heard in the twilight, the hour for worship; and we catch a fleeting glimpse of her in the hours of darkness when we are conscious of our deepest spiritual needs.

1398-1400. Lancelot had felt, even from earliest childhood, the promptings of spiritual instincts. He knew that he was born for better things; he was "fair, as a king's son". But his sin had triumphed over his spiritual nature.

1406. Men would become worse by following his example.

1415. **that forgotten mere.** See l. 1400.

1418. According to Malory, Lancelot, after his sin was discovered, fled to his own land, and there became a hermit.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tennyson might have begun the story of Elaine with l. 34; but, instead, in ll. 1-33 he plunges at once into the middle of the narrative. What are the advantages of beginning the story in this way?

*household curiosity*

2. What do you learn regarding the characters of Lancelot and Elaine respectively, from ll. 1-33?

3. Point out three or four details that help to make the story of the finding of the diamonds picturesque.

4. "the diamond jousts which Arthur had ordain'd" (ll. 31-2).

(a) Explain how it came to pass that these jousts were ordained.

(b) Explain why Lancelot finally decided to go to the jousts. Why was he "wroth at himself" (l. 159)?

5. Refer to the different passages in the course of the poem which show in what estimation King Arthur was held by Guinevere and by Lancelot respectively.

6. "In the interview between Lancelot and Guinevere before he goes to the jousts, Lancelot appears in a somewhat unfavorable light, but during his visit to the Castle of Astolat we see only his nobler qualities." Refer to passages in the poem in illustration of this statement.

7. Point out any details mentioned in the poem, which enable the reader to form some idea of the personal appearance of Lancelot.

8. On what different occasions are Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine mentioned in the poem? What are the characteristics of each as here portrayed?

9. "Elaine as she appears in the poem is a mere child, possessing none of the qualities of a mature woman." Do you agree with this estimate? Give reasons for your answer.

10. (a) "Lancelot's decision to wear the favour of Elaine was fraught with far-reaching consequences, which he did not anticipate." Explain.

(b) On what different occasions is the red sleeve brodered with pearls mentioned in the poem?



11. In ll. 443-463, point out those details which serve to increase our admiration for Lancelot.

12. Contrast the emotions of Guinevere and Elaine respectively upon hearing that Lancelot had been wounded in the tournament.

13. Point out three different passages in the story in which Gawain is portrayed, directly or indirectly, in an unfavourable light. What qualities worthy of admiration does he possess?

14. The diamond which was the prize of the tournament came successively into the keeping of Arthur, Gawain, Elaine, Lancelot, and the Queen. Show under what circumstances, and with what emotions, each received it.

15. "The conduct of the Queen on each of the occasions in which she appears in the poem, shows that she possesses a strong-willed and passionate nature." Illustrate by reference to the poem.

16. "This was the one discourtesy that he used" (l. 981). At what different points in the remainder of the poem is reference made, under dramatic circumstances, to this discourtesy?

17. How do you account for Elaine's wish to be taken to Camelot, to "find the palace of the King" after her death?

18. In Lancelot's reverie at the conclusion of the poem: (a) What comparison does he make between Elaine and Guinevere? (b) Why does his name "seem a reproach" to him? (c) In what lines does he betray his weakness of will?

19. What, in your opinion, is the most dramatic scene in the poem? Give reasons for your answer.

20. Select six different lines in the poem, which, in your opinion present details which are strikingly vivid or picturesque.

## NOTES

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### WORDSWORTH

**Life of Wordsworth.** William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was the son of John Wordsworth, an attorney-at-law of Cocker-mouth, Cumberland. When Wordsworth was eight years of age his mother died, and the following year he was sent to the grammar school at Hawkshead, a small village in the Lake District. At the age of seventeen he entered Cambridge, and was graduated four years later. When the French Revolution took place, in 1789, Wordsworth like most of the young men of the time sympathized strongly with the revolutionists. "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive," he wrote later; "and to be young was very heaven." After graduation he went to France, and remained there for more than a year; but the French excesses of 1792 alienated his sympathies, and after his return to England he became strongly conservative.

It now became necessary for him to decide upon a profession, but he was not attracted by either law or divinity and wished to devote himself to poetry. Fortunately he had a small income from his father's estate, and this, together with a legacy left him by a young man whom he had befriended, enabled him to gratify his wish. After a short time he took up his residence, with his sister Dorothy, in Dorsetshire in the south of England. Here he made the acquaintance of Coleridge, and in order to be near his friend he removed in the following year (1797) to a small estate named Alfoxden, in Somersetshire, a few miles from Nether Stowey, where Coleridge was then living. The two friends saw much of each other, and, partly as a result of their discussions regarding poetry, they agreed to publish jointly a small volume of verse. This volume to which was given the name *Lyrical Ballads* was published in 1798. It was an epoch-making volume, for Wordsworth in the preface stated his doctrine regarding the nature and function of poetry. In the meantime Wordsworth decided to visit the continent, and the winter of 1798-1799 was spent in Germany.

Shortly after his return he took up his residence in Grasmere, in the Lake District, in the house known as Dove Cottage, and in 1802 he was married to his cousin, Mary Hutchinson. Wordsworth remained in Grasmere for thirteen years, and during this period much of the best of his poetry was written. In 1813 he removed to Rydal Mount, which overlooks the small lake known as Rydal Water, a short distance from Grasmere. Here he lived for nearly forty years; but except for long walking tours and occasional visits to London and the continent, nothing unusual took place during this period. The most important single event of the latter part of his life was his appointment as poet-laureate upon the death of Southey in 1843. Seven years after this he died, at the age of eighty, and he was buried in the churchyard at Grasmere.

**Literary Style.** Wordsworth's purpose in writing poetry was to present in simple emotional form some of the essential truths regarding human life. In order to do so he took the subjects of his poems from Nature and from humble life and attempted to express his thoughts and feelings regarding them in simple and natural form. We find, as a result, that his poems are bare of ornamentation and that they depend for their effectiveness upon their clear and forcible style and upon the emotional character of the great truths which they express. "He took the commonest sights of earth and the homeliest household affections and made you feel that these which men commonly take to be the lowest things are indeed the highest."

"How welcome to our ears, long pained  
By strife of sect and party noise,  
The brook-like murmur of his song  
Of nature's simple joys!

The violet by its mossy stone,  
The primrose by the river's brim,  
And chance-sown daffodil, have found  
Immortal life through him.

The sunrise on his breezy lake,  
The rosy tints his sunset brought,  
World-seen, are gladdening all the vales  
And mountain-peaks of thought."

**Ode to Duty.** The *Ode to Duty* was written in 1805, while Wordsworth was living at Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

An ode is, literally, a song or chant. It is a dignified form of verse expressing an exalted mood of the poet. In English poetry the ode takes various forms, and there is no rule which governs the length of line or the character of the stanza. In writing the *Ode to Duty* Wordsworth took for his model Gray's *Ode to Adversity*, which was, in turn, an imitation of one of the odes of Horace. In this ode, Wordsworth takes for his theme an abstract virtue the exercise of which usually involves unpleasant effort, and which is not usually regarded as an inviting subject for poetry. And yet, harsh and forbidding as "duty" is, Wordsworth has enabled us to see in it a source of abiding strength and happiness,—not only a principle of conduct, but a law underlying the existence of all created things.

In the earlier editions of the poem there was prefixed to it a Latin motto which summed up the main thought of the Ode. A free translation of this motto is as follows:

"Good no longer by design, but brought by habit to the point where I am not only able to do right but am able to do nothing unless it is right."

The same thought is expressed also in Tennyson's *Ænone*, in those lines in which Pallas, the goddess of wisdom, is represented as saying that

"to live by law,  
Acting the law we live by without fear;  
And, because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom, in the scorn of consequences."

### NOTES ON ODE TO DUTY

1. daughter of the Voice of God. It is because God has revealed his will to us that we are able to distinguish right from wrong and know what course of action we ought to follow.

2. The poet evidently feels that the word "duty" suggests something that is harsh and forbidding, whereas duty in the sense of "law" is in reality a source of strength and happiness.

3. a light to guide. Those who have made it a law consciously at all times "to do right because right is right" can more easily decide upon a course of action. There is usually only one "right" course for them to follow.

6. empty terrors. We sometimes shrink from a duty because we fear that it will be unpleasant or irksome; but usually it proves to be less disagreeable than we had imagined. Our fears were groundless or "empty".

7. vain temptations. The temptation to follow a course of action which will bring no real satisfaction. It is the course of action, rather than the temptation, that is "vain" or empty.

8. Human nature is "frail," and we are often tempted to neglect our duty; and sometimes it is only after a wearisome struggle that we come to a decision as to what we shall do. But when we have made up our mind to do at all times what it is our duty to do, this inner conflict ceases. There is only one course of action for us to follow.

9-10. There are . . . on them. There are those who do not consciously follow any fixed rules of conduct,—who do not ask whether a certain course of action is right or wrong.

10. in love and truth. Because they are warm-hearted and sincere in disposition.

11-12. They are content to trust to the generous impulses of youth, and they are never troubled by the feeling that these impulses might lead them astray.

14. know it not. Are not consciously following any fixed law of conduct.

19. When it is safe for us to trust to the warm and generous sympathies of youth.

20. joy its own security. Because we are happy we do what is right, and thus our continued happiness is ensured.

22. Even now. Even when early youth is past. Wordsworth was thirty-five years of age when he wrote this poem.

not unwisely bold. Relying confidently on their own impulses,—and wisely so.



23. **this creed.** That "love is an unerring light".

24. **according to their need.** In times of perplexity, when it is difficult to know what to do.

25. **untried.** Lacking experience, and hence ready to trust too blindly to his impulses.

26. **Not easily carried away by any sudden emotion.**

33-5. **This resolve is not the result of any passing agitation or any feeling of remorse.**

36. **He has thought the matter over calmly.**

37. **unchartered freedom.** Freedom without any conditions or limitations.

38. **It is hard to resist the impulses of the moment.**

39-40. **Henceforward he hopes only for one thing,—not some uncertain pleasure, but the constant satisfaction of knowing that he has done what is right.**

41-2. **Duty is stern in her demands; but the performance of duty brings with it the highest kind of happiness.**

45-8. **Duty in human life corresponds to law in the material world. The flowers are beautiful and fragrant because of the operation of natural laws. It is because of the operation of these laws too that the stars continue in their courses, and that the constellations remain unchanging and beautiful from age to age.**

47. **wrong.** Destruction.

53. **made lowly wise.** Knowing that this is the wisest course for me to follow,—and humble and submissive because of this knowledge.

54. **self-sacrifice.** Sacrificing my own selfish desires for pleasure.

55. **The confidence of reason.** More confident regarding my own course of action because I shall act, not from impulse, but from reason.

56. **in the light of truth.** Knowing that I am following the wisest and truest course.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What, according to Wordsworth, do we gain by following the dictates of duty rather than trusting to our own instincts or impulses?

2. "Glad hearts, without reproach or blot" (l. 13). Who are these "glad hearts"? In what sense are they "without reproach or blot"? What does the poet mean when he says that they "know it not"?

3. Why does the poet desire to be governed wholly by duty? Why does he not feel any dread that the mandates of duty will be found disagreeable and irksome?

4. Explain "Stern Lawgiver" (l. 41). What is the force of "yet" in this line?

5. "In the *Ode to Duty* the poet mentions three different attitudes which an individual may assume with regard to duty." What are these three different attitudes?

6. Wordsworth compares duty in human life with law in the material world. But these two are not the same. In what respect are they different?

7. (a) In what way does duty set us free from vain temptations (l. 7)?

(b) Is it true that joy is its own security (l. 20)?

(c) What does the poet mean when he says that duty preserves the stars from wrong (l. 47)?

(d) Explain "humbler functions" (l. 49); "my weakness" (l. 52); "the confidence of reason" (l. 55).

8. Show what meaning is expressed by each of the following adjectives as here used: stern (l. 1); empty (l. 6); vain (l. 7); weary (l. 8); dread (l. 16); unerring (l. 19); bold (l. 22); timely (l. 30); unchartered (l. 37); benignant (l. 42); most ancient (l. 48).

the boast of heraldry, the pomp  
of power.  
Some village Hampden that  
with dauntless

## NOTES

### GRAY

**Life of Gray.** Thomas Gray (1716-1771) was the son of a broker who lived in Cornhill, in the heart of London, not far from the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England. His father was a man of morose disposition and violent temper, and to him the poet owed neither his gentle nature nor his poetic gifts. As a boy Gray was sent to Eton, and afterwards to Cambridge. During his school and college days his most intimate friend was Horace Walpole, the son of Sir Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister. After graduating from Cambridge he thought of studying law; but in the meantime Walpole asked him to accompany him on a trip to Europe, and as Gray's means were very limited, Walpole offered to pay all expenses. The two friends set out in the spring of 1739, and after spending some months in France, continued their journey to Italy. Thus two years passed,—and then the friends quarrelled. The quarrel was afterwards made up; but in the meantime they separated, and Gray returned to England.

Shortly afterwards his father died, and the home in Cornhill was broken up. Gray's mother went to live with her sister at Stoke Poges, a little hamlet some twenty-five miles from London. Gray again thought of studying law, but finally decided to return to Cambridge to continue his classical studies. As an undergraduate he had disliked Cambridge strongly because the chief study was mathematics, while he was interested in classics. But his income was small, and he could live cheaply there and at the same time could enjoy the advantages of a library. So he decided for Cambridge, and henceforward for thirty years Cambridge was to be his home.

In the meantime he spent the summer of 1742 at Stoke Poges, and there he wrote two poems, the *Ode to Spring*, and the ode *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. It is probable that the *Elegy* was begun also in this year; but it was not completed until the spring of 1750. It was published in

1751, and Gray, much to his surprise, found himself suddenly famous. After the publication of the *Elegy*, the remainder of Gray's life was marked by no outward event of special importance. He produced two fine odes, *The Bard* (1754) and *The Progress of Poesy* (1757), and translated various poems from Norse and Celtic literature. He undertook several journeys to the Scottish Highlands and to the Lake District, and latterly spent a good deal of time in London in pursuit of his studies. But aside from this, his life was uneventful. He died at Cambridge in 1771, and was buried in the churchyard at Stoke Poges.

**Literary Style.** Practically all of Gray's poems were produced between 1740 and 1760, at a time when both the subject-matter and style of English poetry were undergoing a change. (See p. 71). Everything that Gray wrote was polished and repolished with the greatest care, and in this respect he followed the example of the classical poets of the preceding period; but in all other respects his poetry bears marked evidences of the changes that were taking place. He did not make use of the heroic couplet, because it was not suited to his meditative mood; his language is formal, and at times even stilted and artificial; and he makes constant use of personification, which was characteristic of mid-century prose and poetry. In subject-matter and general tone, too, his poetry differs from that of the preceding period. In the middle of the century, as a result of the re-awakening of emotional and religious life, there was a tendency to moralize, and the poetry of the period is melancholy in tone. Of both these characteristics the *Elegy* affords an excellent example. But although written in a melancholy theme, the *Elegy* shows an appreciation of nature, a sympathy with the joys and sorrows of humble life, and a genuine heart-felt emotion which are in themselves evidences of a wholly new spirit in English poetry.

**The Elegy.** The country churchyard which is described in the *Elegy* is situated in the open country some two miles from the village of Stoke Poges and not far from the town of Slough, near Windsor. Gray first visited Stoke Poges in the year 1742, when he attended the funeral of his uncle Jonathan Rogers; and it is supposed that the *Elegy* was begun at that time. In



the same year Gray's mother went to live in the neighbourhood of Stoke Poges with her widowed sister; and from that time forward Gray made frequent visits to her. In 1749 his aunt died, and at her death his thoughts once more turned to the *Elegy*. It was completed in 1750 and was published in the following year. Needless to say, it met with immediate popularity, and it ran through four editions within two months.

It is easy to see why the poem should have been so much admired, and why it is still such a favourite with all classes of people in the present day. It deals with a common human experience, and the simple emotions which it describes are expressed in lofty and dignified language. It concerns itself, moreover, with the poor and humble, "the rude forefathers of the hamlet", rather than with the rich, for the families of the well-to-do were usually buried in the church itself rather than in the churchyard. Partly because of its careful workmanship and partly because it expresses sentiments which we all feel, it remains to-day one of the few classics of the eighteenth century which has held, and will continue to hold, its place in the affections of the people.

In the latter part of the *Elegy* the poet describes, in anticipation, his own funeral, and speaks of his epitaph. When he died in 1771 he was buried in the country churchyard in the same tomb as his mother; but for a long time there was no special inscription to mark his grave. At length, however, a tablet to his memory was placed on the outside wall of the church, opposite the tomb; and a monument was erected in a park near by. In the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey there is also a tablet to his memory.

### NOTES ON THE ELEGY

9. *yonder ivy-mantled tower.* The tower of the parish church at Stoke Poges.

13. *that yew-tree's shade.* It has been suggested that this should read, "that yew-trees shade," because the yew is not a large tree. In that case the meaning would be "those rugged elms that shade the yew-trees of the churchyard."



16. **rude.** Lacking refinement, unpolished.

17. **incense-breathing.** Breathing fragrance.

26. **glebe.** Sod, turf.

29. **Ambition.** Ambitious people. Such personification is frequent throughout the poem.

33. **The boast of heraldry.** The pride of lineage or family descent. Heraldry was the science that dealt with armorial bearings; and a family who were versed in heraldry and knew the meaning and history of their coat-of-arms might be in a position to boast of their lineage.

38. **trophies.** Memorials to commemorate their great deeds.

39. **fretted vault.** The arched ceiling ornamented with fret-work.

41. **storied urn.** A vessel containing the ashes of the dead and inscribed with a record of his virtues.

**animated bust.** A life-like image.

43. **provoke.** Call forth.

41-44. What is the use of such trophies? they cannot bring the dead back to life, and neither honour nor flattery can appeal to those who are dead.

46. **pregnant with celestial fire.** Filled with the poetic spirit.

48. **the living lyre.** The musical instrument seeming almost as if it had life.

51. Their poetic fervour (rage) was repressed by poverty.

52. **the genial current of their soul.** The flow of their finer feelings and emotions.

58. **The little tyrant of his fields.** The landowner who attempted to tyrannize over him.

60. **guiltless of his country's blood.** The general opinion held of Cromwell in the eighteenth century was that he was a cruel tyrant who was "guilty of his country's blood." The village Cromwell is guiltless because he has had no opportunity to act the part of a real Cromwell.

61. **senates.** Assemblies.

64. In the gratitude of the nation they saw the results of their own efforts.

65-72. If their humble lot prevented the development of their best qualities, it also limited their opportunity for doing wrong. It prevented them from becoming tyrannical, from telling what is false, from having to conceal their feelings of shame, and from accepting the flattery which poets too often bestow upon their proud and wealthy patrons.

70. *ingenuous*. Without artifice, frank, open-hearted.

73. This line is adjectival to the pronoun *they* implied in *their*.

*madding*. Maddening, distracting.

76. *tenour*. Course.

78. *still*. Always, in all cases.

81. *unlettered*. Uneducated.

87. *the warm precincts of the cheerful day*. The warm, bright earth.

*precincts*. Limits, boundaries.

88. *nor cast*. Without casting.

90. *pious drops*. Tears which are due to the dying (Lat., *pious*, dutiful). It soothes the dying to know that some one is weeping for their loss.

91. Even the dead seem to cry out for remembrance.

93. *thee*. The poet is addressing himself.

94. *artless*. Simple, without deceit.

97. *Haply*. Perhaps. *Swain*. Countryman, rustic.

105. *smiling*. Modifies *he*, l. 106.

108. Or . . . or. Either . . . or, a poetical form.

123. *Science*. Knowledge, in the wide sense of the word.

126-8. His merits and his weaknesses are both alike left in the hands of God.

*dread abode*. Explained by the last line, which is in apposition.

*trembling*. With fear or anxiety.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. (a) "The various features of the scene, as described in the first three stanzas, are in harmony with the poet's mood in composing the *Elegy*." Point out the features of the scene, to which the quotation refers.

(b) Show what meaning the poet wishes to express by means of the following words, as here used: parting, plods, glimmering, wheels, bower.

2. "The details mentioned in ll. 17-28 are intended to represent the activities of three different periods of the day." Show that this statement is true.

3. In ll. 29-44 what answer does the poet give to those who speak slightly of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet" who are buried here?

4. In ll. 37-40 the poet says that it is not the fault of these humble people that they have not been buried with pomp and show, and that no costly tomb has been erected to their memory. Give in simple language a brief summary of the poet's reasons for this statement, as expressed in ll. 45-76.

5. Show the relation in thought between ll. 53-56 and ll. 45-48; and also between ll. 57-60 and ll. 45-48. Can you suggest a rearrangement of these stanzas which might improve the continuity of thought?

6. What special virtues and crimes (l. 66) does Gray mention?

7. (a) "Yet ev'n these bones" (l. 77). With what earlier stanzas in the poem is this phrase connected in thought?

(b) What does Gray say as to the character of the "memorials" erected to these humble people?

(c) What reason does he give for the erection of these monuments?

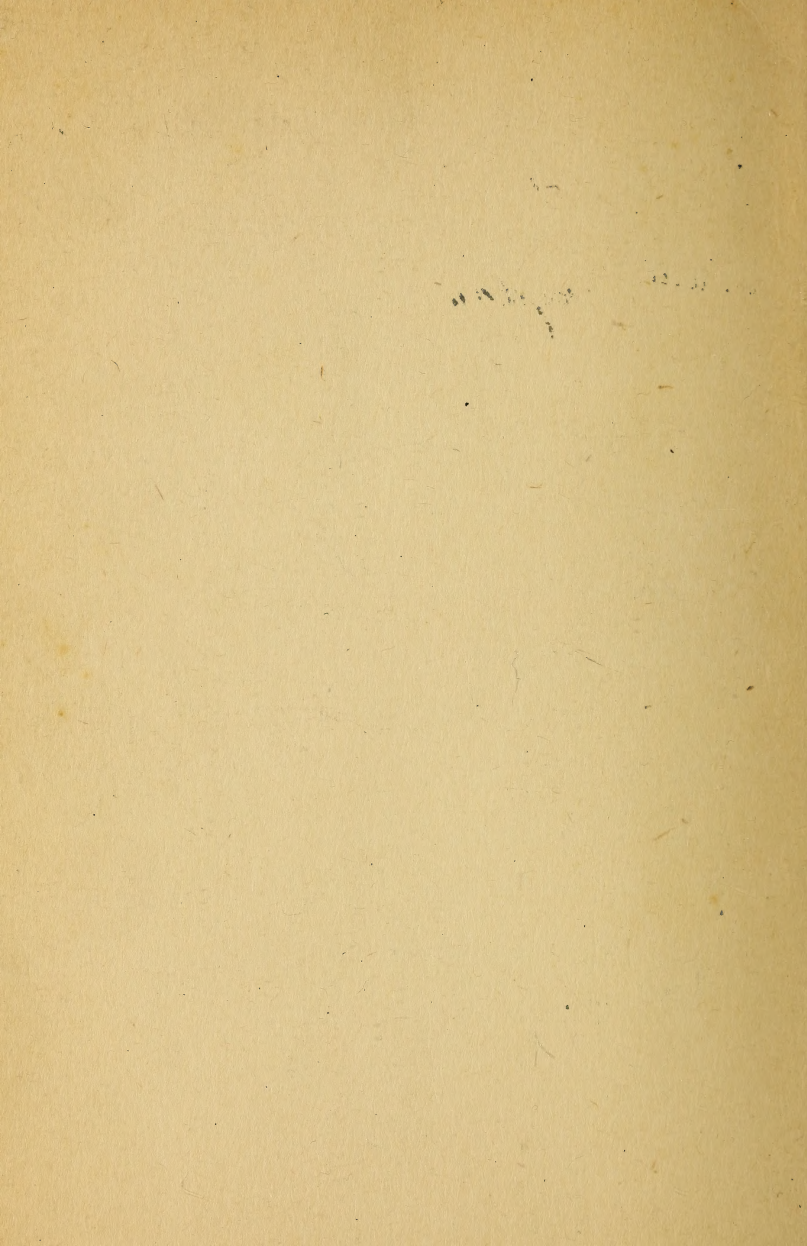
8. What, according to the "hoary-headed swain" were the characteristics of the writer of the *Elegy*?

9. Tell, in simple language what his imaginary epitaph says regarding him.

10. Point out in the poem one example of each of the following: metaphor, personification, alliteration, exclamation, interrogation, oxymoron, harmony between sound and sense.









the magnificent roller thundering  
on the reef.

The sweep of some precipitous rivulets  
to the sea.

Pope and Dryden -

ye are the things that tower that  
shine; whose smile

Makes glad - whose frown  
is terrible - whose frowns

Robed or unrobed do all the  
impress wear

Of awe divine, whose subjects  
never kneels

I in mockery, because it  
is your host to keep them  
free.

